# “Cutting Earth”: Haiti, Soil Conservation, and the Tyranny of Projects

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# ABSTRACT

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The extreme and violent deforestation of rural Haiti has led to a proliferation of environmental conservation aid over the past sixty years. In "Cutting Earth": Haiti, Soil Conservation, and the Tyranny of the Project, I provide an ethnographic examination of environmental conservation and the consequences and prevalence of 'the project' as a form of development aid. I analyze the history of soil conservation in Haiti, the increasing presence of 'projects' in the countryside, the audit culture of aid, and the resulting impacts on environmental government and subjectivities. I focus on the largely ineffective, yet ubiquitous contour canal interventions. While ineffective at retaining soil, these canals become 'successful' through their ability to be measured and accounted for as a development project. The growing prevalence of projects forms new relationships in the countryside and a political economy in which the acquisition, disbursal, and accounting of the project become of primary interest. This research demonstrates how logics inherent in the project form undermine environmental conservation and foster new norms and subjectivities in rural Haiti. Through an ethnographic account of how technologies of aid permeate rural Haiti, this research contributes to contemporary political ecology, Haitian studies, and the anthropology of development.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ANT | Actor Network Theory |
| ATAD | *Asosyasyon Travayè Agrikilte Damòn* |
| CARE | Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere |
| CASEC | *Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale* |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| CWA | Civil Works Administration |
| FAO | United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization |
| HOEA | *Haiti Organisation pour l'Environnement et l'Agriculture* |
| IHC | Initiative for Haiti's Coast |
| IRO | International Relief Organization |
| LOD | Lejè *Organisation pour le Développement* |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| ODM | *Organisation Pour le Développement de Midi* |
| PADF | Pan American Development Foundation |
| PWA | Public Works Administration |
| TIP | Targeted Intervention Project |
| SUV | Sport Utility Vehicle |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNONE | UN entity one (Pseudonym) |
| UNTWO | UN entity two (Pseudonym) |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

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# DEDICATION

For my parents.

# CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The road up to Jan Franswa's[1] house was steep, and in the heat of the Caribbean sun, a hard 45 minute climb up from the highway. Turning around during that hike lent views of the light blue and expansive ocean, a reminder that despite what appeared to be infinite hills, we were on the coast. Jan Franswa, his wife and children lived on the top of a ridge in a small house with an immaculate courtyard of short grass, a stone pathway, and a painted gate that connected to a fence of green cactus. In the courtyard was a small tree, one that provided wonderful shade and caught the waves of breeze that poured over the ridge. I got to know Jan Franswa and his family in the summer of 2011 during another research venture, and would usually bring a treat for his kids. That day in early November of 2012, I carried a bag of mandarins I had bought at the market down the coast in Powapè.[2]

Jan Franswa greeted me and set up two chairs underneath the tree. I swigged water as I tried to stop sweating. The walk up the road was quite exposed. Most of the land on either side of the road was used for agriculture. If I came up in the morning, I could find Jan Franswa on the side of the road in his garden, weeding or planting on the slope of the hill. He had a strong laugh, a lean frame, warm eyes, and an incisive mind. I hadn't seen him since Hurricane Sandy had passed through at the end of October. I asked him how his canals were faring. He had been the recipient of a soil conservation project that had dug contour canals in the hillside garden in front of his house. Contour canals, also known in the countryside as *koupe tè* (cut earth), are an intervention designed to prevent the soil runoff that plagued rural Haiti. The canals were

[1] This dissertation will observe the Haitian Kreyòl spellings of people, places, and things.
[2] Names of people and places in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

composed quite simply of ditches that ran across the contour of the hillside. The dirt excavated was piled on top of the downhill wall, forming a 'bund' often planted with trees to stabilize the mound-canal unit. Contour canals were variously referred to as canals and by their 'mound' complement (ramp, bund, billon). Jan Franswa said that the canals that were built by the soil conservation project had started filling up with dirt. He said that for the first time, he had an indication of how much soil was being lost off of his land: "if those canals weren't there, all of that dirt would have just gone down the hill" (author interview notes, 11/3/12).

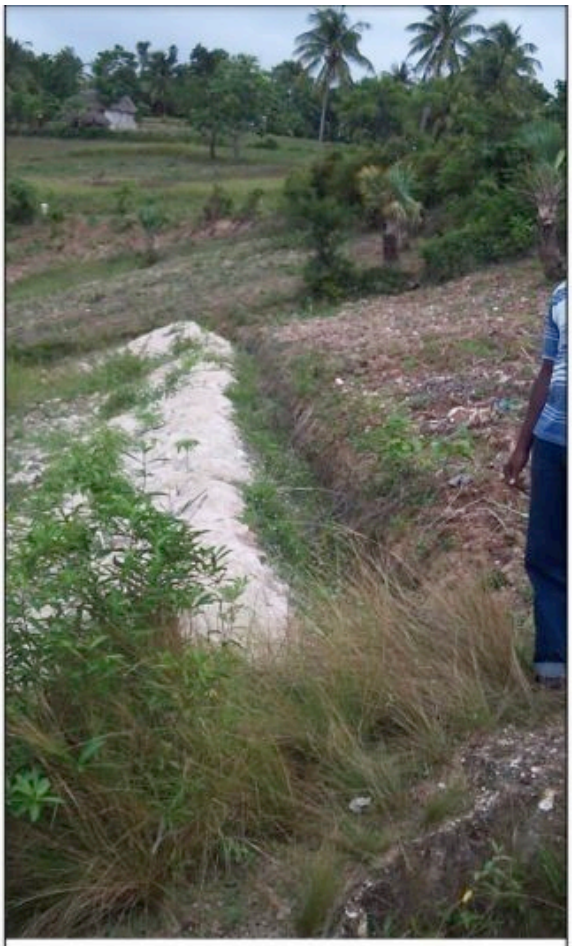

Figure: Contour canals near Jan Franswa's home.

Jan Franswa was well informed about the broader political economy of aid. We spoke of the subsidized rice imports from the United States, which affected not only Haitian rice farmers, but Haitian farmers in general.[3] With such cheap imported food, it was increasingly difficult for farmers to compete. The neighboring Dominican Republic has played a similar role, exporting such a large quantity of eggs to Haiti (see Fieser and Charles 2013) that it is nearly impossible to find Haitian eggs in the countryside. Given subsidized food from the United States and continuous imports from the Dominican Republic, how could small rural agricultural aid programs hope to succeed? In the face of all of this, Jan Franswa saw the efforts of agro-ecological aid (that focused on planting strategies, seed donations, technical advice, and soil conservation) as doing little good.

After talking about the futilities of agro-ecological aid, Jan Franswa looked in the direction of the canals on his land. In spite of the few ditches dug on the hillside, soil was continually sliding downhill as a result of rain, continual tilling, and a lack of permanent vegetative coverage. It was apparent that his canals were not going to stop the flow of soil down the hillsides. "It is like soil conservation is delaying ever so briefly what is constantly happening, sort of like agricultural development" (author interview notes, 11/3/12).[4] For him, the small, temporary structures were nothing in comparison to the onslaught of anthropogenic soil erosion— just like agricultural aid projects were but a small drop in the bucket against the tide of larger economic forces.

This dissertation is about these two slow slides: soil and agro-ecological aid in Haiti. One is meant to address the other. But over the past sixty years of development aid, the two have continued in tandem: a long slow trickle of soil accompanied by a long slow trickle of

[3] In 1995 Haiti's protective rice tariffs were lowered from 35% to 3% as part of a coercive deal forged by Bill Clinton with Haitian President Aristide (see Katz 2010).
[4] All conversations, unless otherwise noted, were conducted in Kreyòl.

interventions. These interventions, specifically contour canals— the cut earth of Haiti— have largely been ineffective. Yet they are continually propagated and labeled successful through a series of metrics that depend not on the exigencies of agriculture or soil, but rather the internal logics of the development project. Seen almost as a natural order of development, projects assert a particular logic of implementation. As they spread into the countryside, projects insist on specific arrangements of space and time, and impose particular relations of labor. These logics affect the design, implementation, and evaluation of aid such that the exigencies of project logic undermine the goals of conservation. Not only does this create a proliferation of questionable conservation interventions, it also comprises a far more profound change in the countryside. The acquisition, disbursement, and 'success' of the project becomes perhaps more important to aid organizations than the primary 'services' that the project provides. New norms and expectations are fostered that constitute a type of governing and subjectivity oriented not towards environmental conservation, but rather the logic of 'the project' itself.

## *The Research Project*

This dissertation develops several key concepts in political ecology and the anthropology of international development. Building off of a grounding in political ecology, this research moves towards examining the multiple translations that occur in the context of conservation interventions (West 2006, Mathews 2011). I draw on political ecology to make sense of the movements of soil in a larger world system. While studies of soil degradation prior to the late 1980s were restricted to the set of actors physically interacting with the soil (farmers and soil scientists), the framework of political ecology (Blaikie 1985, Blaikie and Brookfield 1987)

asserted the social dynamics in studying soil, and broadened the political and economic scope. Such a framework focused attention on the negotiations of the land managers: "Land managers may find themselves responding to changes in their social, political and economic circumstances quite independently of changes in the intrinsic properties of the land which they employ" (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987:3). Political ecology's frame analyzes degradation not just in terms of the farmer's relations to the soil, but also attempts to understand how dispossession for one group is accumulation for another. In the context of Haiti, dispossession benefits the urban elite and (neo)colonial metropoles. Similar to Blaikie (1985) and Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), I examine not only the origins of soil degradation, but the origins of soil conservation, the 'solution' to the problem.

The formulation of solutions is based on a particular problematization, an assertion of relationships. In many cases, the actor defining the problem places themselves as one of the primary (if not *the* primary) solution(s) (Callon 1986). Such networks of problems and solutions cannot be accepted as matters of fact, but rather 'matters of concern' open to investigation (Latour 2004), where the 'black box' of international aid might be further queried and teased apart. If we probe these assertions— if we take them not as scientific facts but constructions dependent on a set of assumptions— then we might see scientific facts as worthy of investigation. As soil erosion becomes globally problematized by governments and aid agencies as the deficiency and malpractice of farmers, the monitoring, management, and regulation of farmers' practices becomes an attractive answer (Pretty and Shah 1997). From the start of the soil conservation movement of the 1930s, erosion was seen as a problem arising out of bad farming practices, contributing to solutions of management and control.

As soil conservation interventions spread, their impacts go far beyond addressing soil erosion. The consequences of what interventions do outside of how they 'fail' or 'succeed' have been a key facet of the anthropology of development. In effect, the implementations of policies or projects are always unforeseeable. To account for this in a study of soil conservation, we must acknowledge the intersection of globally circulated documents and ideologies, the multiple interactions of human actors (farmers, aid workers, agronomists), and the always mobile trees and soils that comprise soil conservation interventions. As these actors are enrolled in the assemblage of a project, they become yet one more 'project' to enter into rural Haiti. The timeline of an individual project is but a moment in the long history of projects in Haiti: the agro-ecological landscape becomes a timeline of timelines. Year after year, various interventions come and go, leaving their mark on hillsides through structural alterations to the land.

This dissertation develops the key concept of 'projectification'.[5] I define projectification as the ongoing process in which project forms spread throughout a spatial area, and in which the materials and ideologies of the project become more and more integrated into the social context. By deploying the concept of projectification, I draw attention to the consistent place of projects in the Haitian countryside and everyday life. Organizations and individuals see projects not as distant administrative concepts, but rather intimate possibilities for household income or organizational resources. Simultaneously, institutions (such as NGOs) need to acquire and distribute projects in order to continue their work. This exchange constitutes a political economy of the project. With this proliferation there exists a simultaneous spread of the logics of projects that slowly become part of people's lives.

[5] The term projectification was originally introduced by Michael Sedra (2003) to describe the way that aid becomes scattered into projects rather than a cohesive whole. While this is helpful, I expand this by thinking about the way that other 'things' actually become 'like a project'.

As a part of these project logics, this research highlights the concept of audit culture in project design, implementation, and measurement. Audit culture describes the social fields implicated in and produced by financialized assessment (Strathern 2000, Power 1997). These highly financialized forms of observation codify accountability through a set of procedures and practices. Things outside of such procedures then become invisible. In the case of assessing contour canals, the project, assessable only through financialized metrics, comes to undermine environmental conservation. Rather than assessing the growth of trees or the sliding of soils (difficult to measure in the short-term), only financially measurable indicators are assessed. Since the introduction of contour canals, soil conservation measures are labeled 'successful' while soil continues to erode.

But more than assessing the material effects of such interventions, or whether or not projects do what they are intended to do, this research seeks to understand the ways that agro-ecological projects bring with them a novel type of government. Detailed ethnographic description demonstrates how the project influences relations of time and space, and alters relationships between individuals. This imposition of new norms obliges a discussion of the governmentality of the project. Governmentality, as developed by Michel Foucault (1991), analyzes the art of governing, the change from direct control over individual bodies towards a disposing of things, such that individuals act "as they should" (Foucault 1991:92). With the pervasiveness of development projects, I argue that the entrance of project norms into the quotidian affairs of the countryside constitutes a type of project governmentality. While not an overt form of power, it is all the more intense for its diffuse and profound penetration.

This research traces the possibilities and processes that occur within development projects, and the ways in which those projects comprise new types of governance. By

highlighting the project as a fundamental facet not only of development but a broader organizational and ontological principle in Southern Haiti, two sets of questions guide this research. The first set of questions examines soil conservation interventions. How are soil conservation structures propagated and multiplied? How are these structures constitutive of a project based logic of development that supersedes discourses of conservation? These questions deal with not only the propagation of particular structures but in so doing uncover the internal logics asserted by aid projects. The second related set of questions asks how the constant presence of aid projects has affected attitudes and practices of the actors involved. What happens as projects continue to permeate Haiti? What are the properties of these projects? How do they constitute a particular type of governing and reshape subjectivities?

In this introduction, I will present the outline and course of this dissertation. First, I acknowledge the literatures that situate this study. I will then provide the historical and social context in Haiti. The research takes place in a landscape of agriculture as well as a landscape of aid, both of which need sufficient contextualization. I then discuss the ethnographic methods used. Finally, I provide an outline for the remainder of the dissertation.

## *Political Ecology*

Since Piers Blaikie's foundational work in soil and political ecology, soil has become a material of debate, a representation of global political and economic inequality. This dissertation builds on political ecology's contributions to the study of soil, and critiques the paradigm of 'environment and development' (Sachs 1993, Escobar 1992). Building on broader interrogations

of political ecology and conservation interventions, this study asks how particular assemblages or infrastructures of thought come to bear on soil through development projects.

Deforestation and soil degradation are not independent of the patterns of extraction that plague rural Haiti. Rather, the movement of resources from the countryside into urban and European/American markets is part and parcel of the deforestation and degradation that occurs. This analysis emerges from a perspective of political ecology. Blaikie (1981, 1985) and Blaikie and Brookfield (1985) developed a political ecology that combines cultural and human ecology with a focus on global political economy. This leads to studies of land and soil degradation in terms of a larger world system (for example, Schmink and Wood 1987, Hecht and Cockburn 2010, Moseley 2005). Not only does political ecology help to examine the point of degradation, but it broadens an analysis to consider the broader and diffuse forces that act on soil erosion and environmental degradation.

While such analyses were embraced as a fundamental challenge to the prevailing notions of population growth and environmental degradation (discussed in Chapter Two), other scholars found the original frame of marxist political ecology to be problematic. Peet and Watts (1996) note that the early iterations of political ecology are under-theorized in their conception of marginalization, production, and poverty. Additionally, they argued for allowance of a plurality of perceptions in environmental and resource problems. More contemporary scholarship often pays attention to gendered environments, and the production of multiple realities at play (Bierzack and Greenburg 2006). Scholars have further developed this concept by examining how NGOs that seek to manage and regulate are at odds with other ways of knowing in the space of project implementation (West 2006). Such investigations highlight the multiple ontologies in encounters between those who wish to control space, and those who live within that space

(Povinelli 1995, West 2005). Further environmental studies have also emphasized a focus on place as opposed to a diffuse concept of globalization and transnationalism (Escobar 2001, 2008).

As anthropology has queried the origins and processes of degradation, it has also critically examined government interventions to 'fix' such degradation. Investigations into institutional regulation and appropriation of the environment have grown along with the increasing concerns of conservation, sustainable development, and changing environmentalisms. Neoliberal economic assumptions and the commodification of the environment has been a prominent theme of such initiatives. Increasingly, the assumption behind neoliberal conservation measures is that nature has not been sufficiently commodified, and that removing restrictive state structures will facilitate this conservation (Igoe and Brockington 2007). In effect, the model of conservation and development ties conservation to development, and ties development to the larger market economy (Escobar 1999, Sachs 1993).

There has also been intense state interest in regulating and organizing the environment, often eliminating illegible and unpredictable 'nature' for ordered approximations of organisms and environments for resource harvesting (Scott 1998). Anthropological investigations have focused on the way that these interventions draw on existing discourses and histories of colonial development, all which endeavor to 'improve' the welfare of particular communities (Li 2007). Such inquires highlight the 'trustee' and the 'expert' who claim to know how others should live. The focus on expertise, and the way that conservation and development becomes made visible and rendered technical, creates particular problematics. Science and technology studies (Latour and Woolgar 1986), and actor network theory (Callon 1986, Latour 1993, Latour 2005) have been particularly useful in combination with understanding such technical and 'expert'

renderings of nature. Such perspectives uncover the ways in which scientific knowledge is constructed, used, and circulated (Goldman et al. 2011). Using actor network theory and science and technology studies, scientific theories can be investigated as actors themselves as they move from country to country, gaining and losing advocates (Mathews 2011).

This research contributes to environmental anthropology by returning to classic topics of political ecology through novel frameworks. By focusing on soil and soil conservation as an anthropological topic of inquiry, this research takes up again the highly political and violent act of anthropogenic erosion. By examining such politics through processes of translation (Callon 1986) that arise through aid interventions, this dissertation focuses on what roles soils and environments are made to play.

## *The Anthropology of International Development*

This study is also framed conceptually by the critical literature on development aid. Earlier literature concentrated on the destructive potential of aid by charting how the development apparatus had risen as a way for dominant countries to maintain their domination over those they discursively labeled 'The Third World' (Escobar 1995). In addition to chronicling the ways that aid and aid reports represent places and people, early literature introduced the idea that the spread of aid may constitute a type of governmentality represented by the expanding state apparatus (Ferguson 1990).

With the boom of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) came an equally critical response from anthropology. In the late 1990s, critiques of NGOs began to counter the otherwise instrumental literature, pointing out that the literature supportive of NGOs was based on

sweeping generalizations and a fervent faith in the growing NGO network (Fischer 1997). Early on, this growing network of NGOs was seen as the increasing 'privatization of the state' in which states absolved themselves of the risks and responsibilities of governance in broader neoliberal reforms (Karim and Leve 2001). In Haiti, the lack of services is a reminder of this privatization of government activities (Schuller 2009). The discourses of participation used in aid comes under scrutiny as the autonomy of NGOs is influenced by foreign funding and donor policies (Schuller 2012a). This 'outscoring' of the tasks of governing to NGOs prompted critiques of how the lines of 'civil society' and 'the state' were increasingly blurred (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). The specific forms of governing of interest to this research are those that take place through regulation in processes of monitoring, auditing, and making visible (Scott 1998, Mathews 2011, Power 1997, Strathern 2000). Practices of registration that facilitate the above visibility can transform informal and nebulous groups into hierarchies, fostering new 'development' subjectivities (Alvare 2010).

Other scholars have focused on the growing aid apparatus itself. Focusing on the so-called social life of projects (Sampson 1996) considers what happens when discourses are turned into 'projects'. This movement from policy to implementation occurs at the hands of aid workers: the agronomists, project managers, volunteers, and technicians that are key actors in the unfolding aid projects. Recent literature has examined aid workers as workers: analyzing their professional trajectories and the broader social fields in which they live (Fechter and Hindman 2011, Lewis 2011, Jackson 2005). By taking aid workers as simple 'intermediaries' between target communities and the larger bureaucracies, we miss their essential role in translating interests (Lewis and Mosse 2006) and their key role in seeking out projects (Bierschenk et al. 2002).

This dissertation contributes to the anthropology of international development by drawing specific attention to projects and projectification. Building on ideas of the social life of projects (Sampson 1996), this research asks how particular technologies deployed in development enroll actors and come to constrain the possibilities for particular interventions. The concept of projectification draws attention to the power of particular administrative groupings, and how the acquisition and disbursement of projects becomes a part of rural Haiti. Projects constitute an intense form of power as they develop new norms in the countryside. While governmentality has played a prominent role in thinking through development aid, I apply this concept to think through how projects themselves foster norms and subject positions.

## *Networks and Assemblages*

An interest in the array of actors in aid, and a need to methodologically incorporate the multiple interpretations of development has contributed to the introduction of actor network theory (ANT) and science and technology studies in the analysis of development aid. The use of ANT allows concomitant investigations of the multiple interpretations and rationalities of development (Lewis and Mosse 2006). Such a framework focuses on how powerful actors enroll others into their own interpretations (Latour 2005). This focus on 'translation' draws on early actor network theory (Callon 1986), and builds off of the investigation of projects as the tying together of multiple actors (for example, people, ideas, trees, vehicles, and humans) (Latour 1996, 2005).

These approaches show how the coherence of projects is an assertion of one particular translation— in other words, an ontological assertion of the project's existence. Actor network

theory makes explicit for researchers the multiple interpretations of development, and the potential for non-human actors (such as reports, trees, soils, and vehicles) to have significant contributions to aid projects. For example, if trees do not behave as they 'should' according to the translation of a project plan, the success of a project may be in jeopardy. Mosse (2005) brings attention to Latour's (1996) work on translation by showing how policy goals are actively translated into political interests, and how development rhetoric comes to define reality. I will show that the project form nimbly fades into the background of this rhetoric. 'Projects' align with multiple theories of aid, but ultimately alter interventions in consistent ways.

Concepts of global assemblages (Ong and Collier 2005) and the theories of the actor network appear to be nearly synonymous, perhaps putting their compatibility in question. The idea of the assemblage, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), holds that key to questioning actors in an assemblage is to question not what that assemblage means as signified or signifier, but to ask with what other things it functions. The global assemblage (Ong and Collier) contemplates this mobility of objects and ideas as an anthropological problem. The key contribution of the concept of the global assemblage is to acknowledge the types of movements that occur through these assemblages, and to not only analyze those flows but how they change when localized. The concepts of global assemblages draw heavily on Latour's idea of the 'immutable and combinable mobile': "A technoscientific form that can be decontextualized and recontextualized, abstracted, transported, and reterritorialized and is designed to produce functionally comparable results in disparate domains" (Ong and Collier 2005). I use the concepts of 'global assemblages' to think about the way in which certain concepts are globally circulating. For example, the project, while a unique grouping in the context of Haiti, is a form that moves

throughout aid and business:[6] in other parts of the world, similar properties are exerted by 'projects' in slightly different ways. Global assemblages can be territorialized in multiple places at the same time, and in those places of territorialization the network drawn on becomes slightly different, but still exerts a vast array of connections to iterations elsewhere in the world. By drawing on actor network theory to examine these localizations of global flows, I unpack the 'black box' of soil conservation projects, focusing on the relationships of multiple actors involved in that instantiation (Latour 1999, 1996). Understanding projects and soil conservation as global assemblages draws attention to their mobile and global compositions, and to their comparable but unique territorialization in Haiti.

## *Haiti: History and Context*

Haiti is the first free black republic, and the only country to come into being from a successful slave rebellion. Colonial Saint Domingue, Haiti's name under French ownership, was referred to as "The Pearl of the Antilles."[7] But given the violent removal of resources, the loss of life, and destruction wrought by slavery and the plantation economy, we might better think of Haiti as the ransacked 'oyster', whose 'pearl' had long since moved to France. Saint Domingue's slave population was easily the largest in the Caribbean, and during the years of 1785-1790, an average of more than 30,000 people from Africa were forced onto its plantations each year (Geggus 2002:7). This mix of people was heterogeneous linguistically and culturally. Amidst the

[6] Here I refer to the growth of 'the project' in development aid administration and employment (project coordinators and administrators), and University degree specializations such as "project management."
[7] Referring to the wealth that Saint Domingue provided for colonial powers. See, for example, Roc 2008.

massive transport of people who were taken from their homes, families, and lands, in a place where their very humanity was ignored and they were thought of as expensive but expendable 'things', social life had to be re-constituted from the traces of memories and norms that each brought with them (Mintz 2010). This mixing of diverse West African men, women, and children in a depopulated landscape set the stage for creolization: the productive and creative re-ordering of social institutions within the context of slavery (Mintz and Price 1992 [1972]).

But the exploitation of rural populations did not cease with the revolution. Immediately after independence, Jean-Jaques Dessalines established a revised plantation system (Price-Mars 1983[1928]), and under the rule of Henri Cristophe (1807-1816), workers were confined to plantations, and given a small wage for their forced work (Dupuy 1989). Rural Haitians were not interested in continuations of exploitation: in 1826 President Jean-Pierre Boyer declared a new rural code in an attempt to establish a militarized agricultural regime, but rural peasants rejected the land reforms and insisted instead on working their own small plots, a practice that continues to this day (JM Smith 2001).

Throughout history, rural Haiti's labor and resources have been extracted to support the urban classes. From before the revolution and continually after, there was a distinction of two groups in Haiti: the elite merchants, and the *moun andeyò* (Nichols 1985). *Moun andeyò* refers to the Haitian peasantry, and means 'the people outside'. This derogatory term is found in urban centers, used when referring to a countryside that is geographically and conceptually distant. Expropriating the food and export commodities (coffee, and vetiver for example) produced in the countryside, the urban areas and merchants thrive off of the rural peasantry. The lack of government services and infrastructure in the countryside is in stark contrast to the movement of products and commodities that flows to cities such as Port-au-Prince. Paul Farmer (1992) uses

the following quote in describing how explicitly the rural majority has been kept at the margins of Haiti: "People of the rural areas do not remain 'illiterate' *in spite* of the fact that they ensure the survival of city folk and the export trade, but precisely *because* they do so" (Lowenthal 1976:662). It has been the very appropriations and marginalization of rural Haitians that allows the urban trade to prosper. Trends of urban elites continued as both François and Jean Claude Duvalier restructured the state with themselves at the center, pitting themselves against the peasantry, the state against the nation (Trouillot 1990a).

External expropriations of the peasantry occurred alongside domestic ones. After years of isolation by Europe and the United States, in 1825 Haiti's President Boyer agreed to pay (under the threatening presence of a flotilla of French warships) 150 million Francs in order to open trade possibilities (Dubois 2012). [8] This indemnity affected both the economy and the environment. The 20th century engagements of foreign powers proved no kinder. US occupation from 1915-1934 motivated by the concerns of US businesses not only extracted labor and resources, but further forced peasant[9] contributions to the state (Renda 2001). During the occupation, peasants were recruited and tied together like slaves, building 470 miles of road in three years (Deibert 2011).[10]

It is important to recognize these dynamics in understanding how rural peasants have found modes of income generation in the hillsides. Despite the label of *andeyò*, rural Haitians are intricately involved in market activities. They do not produce merely for subsistence but rather are actively involved in selling their products in market settings, using some of the food

[8] Though Boyer would negotiate the indemnity down to 60 million Francs, this quickly made Haiti a debtor nation. See Dubois 2012.
[9] As with Jennie Smith's (2001) work, I use peasant in the sense that rural Haitian's will often use to refer to themselves: *peyizan*. It is a meaningful self defining term that does not necessarily align with simple economic definitions of peasants, but implies a more holistic sense of rural residence.
[10] Such actions took the form of the *konbit*, a form of rotating labor in Haiti, and appropriated it for the purposes of the US government.

produced for household consumption, and selling other food at market. Women are most active in this trade, and in most houses in the countryside, the woman of the house participates in some level in *komès* (commerce, or marketing). But as noted by Sidney Mintz, who has most engaged with Haitian marketplaces, "every link to the market that a peasant needs in order to live the way that he wants, or the way state power makes him live, can be made into an instrument with which to exact a portion of his productivity" (2010:116).

The material realities of the Haitian countryside and Haiti's incorporation into the world system have been deeply entangled with representations of Haiti and Haitians. Haiti has often been depicted as the odd and the exotic: texts and films describing zombies, 'black' magic, and cannibalism portray an otherworldliness (Seabrook 1929, Davis 1985). Trouillot (1990b) notes that Haiti has been conceived of not as simply a unique place, but rather, exceptional— a place apart. These representations have fueled colonial conquest (such as the US occupation— see Renda 2001). Most relevant for this present work is the way in which these representations of 'exception' and 'deficit' intersect with globalized concepts of environmental degradation.

This research contributes to scholarship of Haiti by examining the contemporary countryside and realities of environmental aid. Ethnographies of Haiti have fostered discussions of structural violence, a systematic violence targeting a particular social order through the machinery of oppression (Farmer 2004). In Haiti, such violence can be thought of in environmental terms as a 'slow violence' (Nixon 2011), damage that is nearly imperceptible at first glance such that it seems to be not even violence at all. As environmental degradation continues in Haiti, this research provides an essential role of renewing a critical lens on how degradation occurs and is addressed. For years, environmental research in Haiti has been

sponsored largely by aid institutions. By critically analyzing aid interventions, I bring ethnographically grounded political ecology back into discussions of Haiti's environment.

## *The Setting: Landscapes and Institutions*

Haiti's topography is incessantly mountainous. The mountains rise from the coastline, slowly at first, then faster and faster, until the dirt paths seem to be twisted brown shoelaces appearing and disappearing over consecutive green and brown peaks.[11] At a distance, the hills are smooth, the khaki paths linking small interrupting clumps of trees together. Such clumps of trees indicate the presence of houses. The *lakou*, as such household units and their physical spaces are known, are tied to the protective and resource plenty trees that surround them. But the agriculture that supports the households is spread throughout the hillsides. Early in the morning, when the air is slightly thick with the weight of morning dew and the first light of day has yet to heat the ground, these roads are full of men and women walking with their machetes to agricultural plots. Some in sandals, some barefoot, they will be the main traffic on roads and paths until a rush of children dressed in uniforms come out on their way to school, the older students helping the younger make the river crossings.

I lived in two towns over the course of 7 months of research in 2012. The first town and commune was Lejè, where I lived for approximately 3 months. The town itself is home to hotels and restaurants catering to weekend visitors. But quickly outside of the town, farming again took a primary place. Electricity and water that flows in hotels from private generators and private

[11] The tallest peak near Powapè is approximately 1000 meters, though the majority of hills in Damòn are approximately 100 to 300 meters.

wells did not make it far outside of town, or to every house in town for that matter. The appearance of wealth and infrastructure quickly dissipated within a short walk towards the hills. From the tops of hills, where farmers till soil on steeply sloping land, the expansive Caribbean is in constant view. Farmers plots are filled with maize, beans, and sorghum.

It was not soil conservation that originally brought me to Lejè, it was the large UN led conservation and development project. I was interested in following development funding as it 'trickled' down from funders. While I soon became focused on soil conservation projects as a way to investigate these issues, understanding the broader context of these funding pathways was essential. Part of the ethnographic task was to understand how such interventions were made logical, and how a particular rationale was imposed and defended.

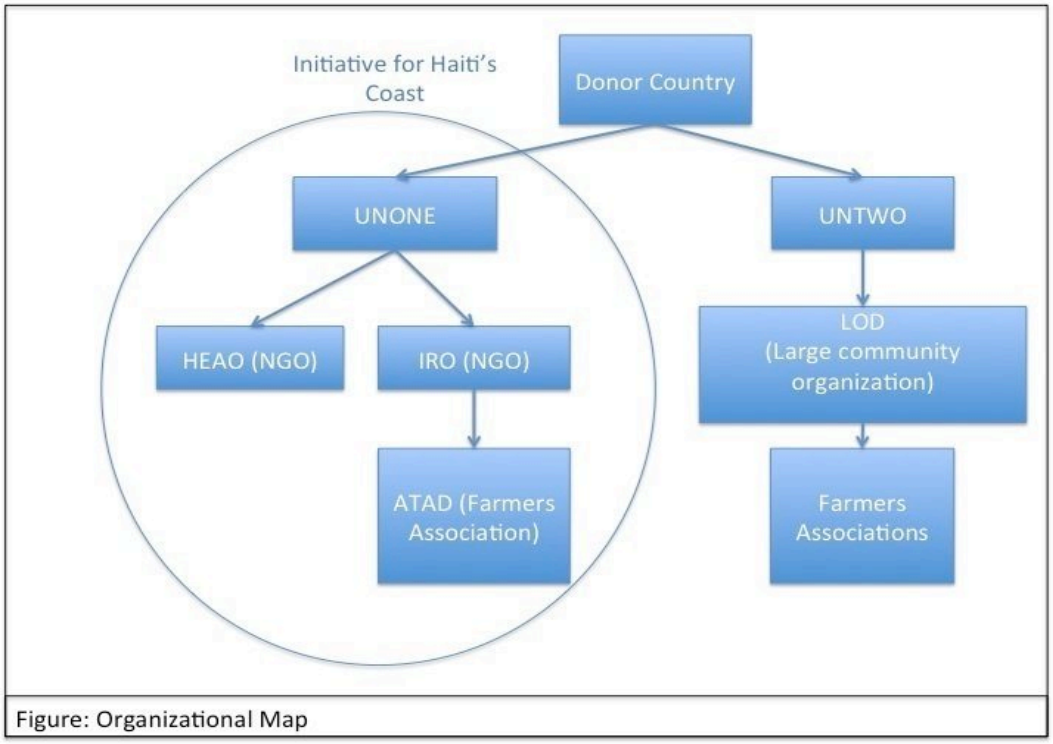

Figure: Organizational Map

The Initiative for Haiti's Coast (IHC) was officially launched in January of 2011, and consisted of 11 organizations including the government of Haiti, a UN agency (UNONE)[12] and a US University. The initiative funded NGOs (two of which are included in this study), some of which then funded smaller farmers associations as subcontractors (see Figure above). UNTWO also received funding, which was routed through a community organization, discussed in Chapter 4. The IHC was to span the entire department, though from 2011 to 2012 it covered most principally 8 communes on the coast. The initiative focused on various sectors: health, education, energy, agriculture and the environment, and tourism. The funding for the IHC came from one donor, a European country that became involved in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Because they had no 'on the ground' presence, they worked through UN agencies in order to disburse their funding. The donor country had agreed to fund both UNONE and another UN agency, UNTWO. Both UNONE and UNTWO worked by contracting NGOs to implement projects. Though UNTWO did not work within the Initiative for Haiti's coast, they funded farmers associations that worked close to the IHC area. Until 2011, the UNONE office was in Port-au-Prince[13], based in one of the trailers at Logbase (the UN headquarters bordering the airport). The move to the town of Lejè was supposedly to attract international talent for the IHC, but one of the IHC employees suspected it was to provide a seaside backdrop for the work of the UN managers. Lejè had become a stopping point for large flows of international capital and development aid.

As my walks through the hillsides of Lejè intersected with more and more contour canals, I began to ask farmers about the origins of the canals, their use, utility, and prevalence. In our conversations, I became aware of curious connections between funders of soil conservation

[12] All organizations are given pseudonyms in this study.
[13] To refer to both Haiti and Port-au-Prince, I use the standard spellings because of their wide usage.

structures, farmers' attitudes toward those structures, and the long history of aid in Haiti. As I came home each day during that period, it was my perceptive wife who drew my attention to the fact that I spoke all too often of these 'odd mounds on the hills'. I then began to focus more intently on the area of Damòn.

Damòn is a communal section of Powapè,[14] where IHC funded two soil conservation projects by two NGOs: The International Relief Organization and *The Haiti Organisation pour l'Environnement et l'Agriculture* (both described below). It was here that I focused for 5 months of research, and where I resided for approximately 4 months. The town of Powapè was on the coast, about a 40 minute motorcycle ride from Lejè. Some small businesses dotted the town, which was made up of a few hundred households. But it was in Damòn, a twenty minute walk or so out of town, where I spent most of my time.

In Damòn, a dirt road out of town followed a river until crossing it, where a string of houses ran for approximately a quarter mile. Further up, the road would dip again and weave in and out of the river, right below the primary school for the region. Children running and walking to school would hop on stones, on the backs of other students, or sit and take of their well-polished shoes to make the crossing. The river was most often but a trickle: when I arrived in Damòn for the first time, walking up the river, I wrote in my field notes that the river was "basically a collection of white boulders" (author notes, 8/8/12). But during the rainy season, the river would rise quickly to a tall and nearly impassable torrent, the result of soil unable to absorb a large quantity of water. Further up, the river forked. To the right was Gran Damòn, and to the left was Tisit. Both consisted of small paths that wound in between houses, and both led to the higher reaches of the mountains. From the ground in Damòn (in the neighborhood called Ti Damòn), the mountains look like a green forested wall, rising steeply above the Caribbean. But

[14] A communal section is the smallest official government unit in Haiti.

when one has reached the heights of those mountains, the green forest shows itself to be an illusion: closer up, it is not forest, but pixelated agricultural plots.


Figure: A view from above the Damòn valley. Powapè in the distance, Ti Damòn in the center, Tisit the forested area to the right, Gran Damòn the forested area to the left.

Even in the far reaches of the hillsides, a few hours' walk from town, land was being used for the cultivation of crops. Corn, beans (pigeon peas), sorghum, manioc, and plantains were grown in the *jaden* (gardens) throughout the region.[15] For Damòn, the peanut harvest was a significant cash crop. The lower hillsides with steep inclinations were devoid of nutrient rich soil, and were therefore used for animal pasture, or the harvesting of peanuts. Many farmers lamented the peanut harvest, as it led to further soil loss: the digging process of harvesting

[15] While incomes are difficult to estimate in Haiti, in 2008 an NGO in the region had estimated US$100 per month in a nearby coastal town. Countryside incomes would likely be lower.

peanuts left loose soil exposed to rains. But economic necessity led farmers to use any land they could for any amount of profit. While the peanut harvest season of late fall found the region in a flurry of activity, the economic befits of peanuts were questionable as they required large labor expenses and were prone to low prices due to market flooding. Non-peanut farmers quietly questioned the rationale of the harvest, but peanut farmers themselves needed the possibility of further income.[16]

The road from Lejè to Damòn is almost as curvy, twisted, and branching as the trail of aid that is woven through the South. I describe the two principle NGOs of the initiative below.

The International Relief Organization:

The International Relief Organization (IRO) was a large international NGO based out of the United States. With offices around the world, the IRO had been in Haiti since 1954. Most staff were Haitian, though the upper levels of management in the regional office were occupied by a group of Americans in their late 20s and early 30s, who had lived in the area from 1 to 2 years. Their office was based in the nearby city, behind large walls and a big metal gate. The office was two stories, and was attached to a large warehouse for the storage of food aid.[17] Vehicles with their emblem would move up and down the coastal roads, continually reinforcing IRO's presence. Much of their revenue in the South was based off of USAID contracts, and therefore the funding received by the IHC initiative was a small portion of their budget. For IRO employees working on IHC projects, they were to dedicate only 15% of their time to IHC work,

[16] In addition to farming, there were quite a number of school teachers in Damòn. A primary school in the area supplied some work, but many would commute far distances into other communes for teaching jobs.
[17] At the time, the warehouse was being expanded and moved from an off site facility.

and 85% to the USAID funded contracts.[18] Largely, IRO worked on the coastal initiative by contracting with what they called community based organizations (CBOs). This included farmers' or womens' associations in the hillsides. The American who was in charge of the regional office said that IRO works with over 40 of these organizations along the coast. Multiple agronomists working for IRO were placed along the coast, working tangentially with the IHC sub-contractors. IRO was one of the largest NGOs in the area. While my focus with them was in the agro-ecological realm, they also had development projects focused on health, food aid, and small business development. I stopped in the IRO office occasionally throughout my fieldwork, mostly to do interviews with the directing staff or agronomists. But most of my interactions were with agronomists in the field, who would travel up to different communities, beginning projects, or monitoring progress.

Asosyasyon Travayè Agrikilte Damòn (ATAD):

The 'community based organization' that IRO worked with in Damòn was *Asosyasyon Travayè Agrikilte Damòn* (ATAD). In the beginning, ATAD received training from Caritas (a development wing of the Catholic Church), and Peace Corps Volunteers. ATAD was made up of men and women in the Damòn area. They first met in 1991, but became a legally recognized entity in 1997. Before projects, they had used their own money to repair roads or do reforestation. Their first project was from Heffer International in 2003. After that, they had a lull when the organization was inactive until 2007. In 2007, an FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) project revitalized the organization through aid after

[18] Except for employees who worked on the Targeted Intervention Program (TIP), which was a 100% contract based position. Those employees would have their jobs for less than a year because TIP lost funding.

Hurricane Noel. Soon after, the organization began a mutual savings and lending group with the help of IRO. The mutual savings group was the most active part of the group in terms of attendance and participation.[19] The contract with IRO in 2012 was for about 2.5 months, in which two hillside plots were used to demonstrate soil conservation strategies. Their work was positioned geographically proximate to the interventions done by *Haiti Organisation pour l'Environnement e Agriculture.*

The Haiti Organisation pour l'Environnement e Agriculture:

The second NGO involved in the IHC effort was the Haitian Environmental Organization (HOEA). Run by two Haitians (a managing administrator and a technical coordinator), the organization was small: the two directors, between 2-3 permanent agronomists, around six project based technicians, and administrative support staff. They were based out of a rather humble fan-cooled building located outside of the regional city. Formed in 1982, they had become quite well respected and had received funding from USAID and the EU. Unlike IRO, they did not do the majority of their work by subcontracting. Rather, their technicians would hire 'agents' from the area of implementation (in this case the coast), and the technicians from their office would supervise the work of the agents, each spending around four days at a time in the area of implementation. The technicians had worked with HOEA for years, and while not agronomists, had experience in the implementation of projects. Agents were residents of the areas in question (while technicians commuted from the HOEA office) and were to provide the

[19] The mutual savings and lending group provided small loans to its members. The interest for each loan went back into the total so that over time the amount to be lent slowly increases.

actual implementation. Agronomists managed the technicians, technicians managed the agents, and the agents worked on tree grafting[20] and sapling planting throughout their assigned region. HOEA's agricultural expertise meant that the office was a common stopping place for visiting aid workers or researchers looking to understand the dynamics of Haitian agriculture. While they had been involved in many USAID contracts, at the time of this research during 2012 their funding came mainly from IHC. I spent each Monday in the offices of HOEA, participating in the meetings between the administrators of the organization, the agronomists, and the field technicians. From those meetings, I began to learn more about the negotiations of a small NGO with international institutions, and what would eventually become the rise and fall of the IHC.

## *The Rise and Fall of an Initiative*

In Lejè, local residents had quickly soured at the first year of the IHC. It was no secret in the town that US$8 million had been given to the initiative, which had proclaimed a 20 year vision of sustainable economic development and environmental regeneration. At one of the main intersections of Lejè, the large, two story, white office sat behind a stout white wall lined with barbed wire, and punctuated with a guard house. Over the tall metal gate at the entrance was a courtyard, filled with the white SUVs that would take employees up and down the coast. Peering over the top of the wall was a boat (that cost approximately US$200,000) that had been on the water some 4 times. The 8 million dollar budget was public knowledge, but what exactly they

[20] Grafting is a process by which cuttings of one variety of tree are spliced onto the branches of another variety of the same species. The technique is often used with mangos, altering the type of mango that the tree produces and favoring large, exportable varieties.

were doing for the town was far more confusing for residents. The benefits, they accurately understood, were being targeted further up the coastline.

Much of the first year's funding went to a concentrated area, a geographically demarcated space and a trial ground for the US University led development intervention. Another hour and a half up the coast from Lejè, this intervention was called, (for the purposes of this research) the "Targeted Intervention Project" (TIP). An office was opened in the main town of Potòn in which members of the partner agencies worked and used as a point of departure for forays into the hillsides of Potòn. Any given day would bring a number of white SUVs parked outside the office, shuttling personnel in and out of the region. According to those who worked as managers of the TIP, big promises about the development of the region were made. It was to be a grand experiment, to prove that with an extreme level of technical expertise, 'development' could be achieved in targeted realms throughout the developing world.

But at the end of one year of funding, in February 2012, the network of the IHC began to unravel. In the spring of 2012, the town of Potòn was up in arms. According to Kata, one of the foreign IHC coordinators, rocks had been thrown at the field office, supposedly because the director of the health clinic had not been given a choice in appointing employees, and had organized a protest. This was not the first 'demonstration'. Kata told me that during the February 2012 visit of the European donors, UNONE tried to relocate a meeting with donors to avoid of the protests of the project. In early June, Kata told me that just the other day, the office in Potòn had to be evacuated because of the threat of protest. In addition to protests, the discourse of government and community participation was cast into doubt: Deslin, one of the managers of the IHC, had received late-night phone calls from government officials yelling, "this is an injustice, you coming in here without consulting anyone!"(author interview notes, 6/18/12).

After the February donor visit, it was made clear by the donors that funding would not continue in the same way. Employees of IHC were panicked. Administrative and support staff started updating their resumes and looking for other work. The NGOs were frustrated. While HOEA would still remain involved, the funding for IRO and the entire TIP initiative was cut. The town of Potòn, once the site of rotating SUVs and the movements of agronomists, health workers, and education experts, quieted down and the office was cleared out. In the end, the project was failed by the wider networks that had been enrolled to support and validate (Mosse 2004).

From the beginning, Manuel, one of the foreign managers of the IHC, argued that I shouldn't study the IHC. "This [topic] isn't so interesting" (author interview notes, 7/14/12). "This [the IHC] is just a tool to accompany the government," he said. In fact, he advised against studying development in general. He said that there are some positive things, a lot of negative things. "Haiti has been on the path of development for 40 years, and there has been no change. The bottom line hasn't changed…Haiti is allergic to change" (author interview notes, 7/14/12). His view on aid presented the IHC as a simple accessory to a problem that was deeply rooted in some aspect of people and place. But I argue that studying facets of aid in Haiti is not only 'interesting', but assumptions about aid and Haiti's past constitute a primary way in which aid *should* be investigated: by tracing the construction of problems and the imposition of internal logics and rationales.

The fall of the IHC is an important context for this dissertation work. It portrays an atmosphere of contention, one that ultimately resulted in the alteration of a larger aid initiative. Through an examination of IHC funded soil conservation and the form of the project, this research focuses on the intimate details of IHC's aid encounters. As highlighted particularly in

Chapter Five, the way that projects funded by the IHC unfold and are evaluated demonstrates how success can be constructed in an atmosphere of contention. The contested history of soil conservation interventions and the contested implementation of IHC projects makes this research project of importance for both Haiti and critical investigations of international aid.

## *Methods*

My fieldwork in the region began in 2011, during a two month field research project. Originally, my dissertation proposal was to follow HOEA as a Haitian NGO negotiating international funding, and to spend time with both the organization and their target populations to better understand how each one conceived of the environment. Because their work was nearly completely focused on the IHC at that point, I was forced to rethink my geographic placement near their offices, and my decision to focus solely on their development interactions as a way to understand how NGOs and rural farmers understand the environment. I found that through thinking about different types of projects in the hillsides, I was able to better understand the broad impacts of international aid funding and the perspectives of farmers associations and farmers themselves.

My seven-month research project in 2012 was fundamentally multi-sited. I chose three primary spaces to conduct concentrated participant observation and interviews. The first was the office of HOEA. In an effort to understand the implications of being a small, Haitian run NGO involved in a large scale development initiative, I met with the HOEA staff every Monday during their field staff meetings. This space allowed me to understand the interactions of NGO administrators, agronomists, and technicians as they discussed and debated the ongoing projects.

It also gave me a point of contrast with which to understand the countryside. Working with technicians in the field and spending time with them in the office meant that I was able to observe, as Dr. Charles Harrington of Teachers College would recommend in class lectures, "what people say, what people do, and what people say they should do."

The second research site was Lejè. I spent two months in Lejè, from the beginning of June until the beginning of September. As the site of the IHC office, it was the location where I began to understand the comings and goings of aid workers and the rapid wind-down of the first year of the IHC project. Because the technicians from HOEA and the agronomists from IRO were all passing through Lejè on their way up the coast, it was also an ideal place to catch a ride and participate in site visits and supervisory meetings. My previous research also gave me contacts with farmer's associations outside of town. These relationships allowed me to participate in meetings, look through old registration documents, and hear about lives and experiences. Such conversations and observations helped to refine the types of questions I would be asking, and pointed me to the importance of examining a third site.

The third location was in the town of Powapè and the communal section of Damòn. I would focus on this region for five months, living here for four. I chose Damòn because it was the site of soil conservation interventions that came from both IRO and HOEA. Both organizations had nurseries located nearly across the road from one another. The IRO intervention was based on two agricultural demonstration plots, while the HOEA intervention was based on grafting mango trees and planting saplings in denuded areas. Damòn's location a twenty-minute walk outside of town afforded me access to the highway for weekly trips to HOEA offices, and travels to other communes with technicians and agronomists. My introduction to Damòn was during a community mapping exercise as part of a day of site visits

with an agronomist team from IRO. During that meeting, one of the IRO agronomists who was very interested (and gracious) in helping me think through my research, suggested I talk further with ATAD, the community organization they were working with.

Because my introduction to the region was through IRO, I was often associated with NGOs and aid funding. Following up after our initial meeting, I met with the leaders of ATAD and explained exactly my research role and independence from IRO. Many of my early conversations in Damòn were explanations of who I was, and what my research could and could not do: I could and would provide a presentation of my findings to the community group (which I also did for HOEA and IRO), but I could not channel funding toward them or provide project funding. One very small thing that I could do for the region of Damòn was to give English classes. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I was talking with a French teacher up in Tisit who suggested it would be of value in the community. Each Sunday, I gave an English class in the afternoon. Sometimes the class was full, sometimes it was close to empty. But parents appreciated that such a class was being offered, and some of the more dedicated students got a leg up on their studies of English. I enjoyed teaching it and while it gave me a way to provide some visible service to the area, it also made me better known.

While doing research in Damòn, I lived in Powapè. My host, Madam Betòn and her family would be one of my greatest sources of support. Madam and Misye Betòn had lived in the United States for most of their lives but retired to Haiti. Their *lakou* was shared with another family, and above their kitchen were two rooms: one for a Haitian nurse from IRO, and one for myself. The bustling courtyard was always filled with the voices of children playing, a long game of dominoes, or inviting chatter. I played Dominoes with our neighbors and Madam Betòn, talked about the history of coffee with Misye Betòn, and discussed the Haitian revolution with

our neighbor the judge.[21] They were all an incredible comfort and support, and helped me to think through my research with patience and insight.

Participant observation

As with most anthropological studies, my primary method was participant observation. Given the diverse groups that I was working with, I had a particular focus with each group, and particular strategies of 'hanging out'. With agronomists and technicians, I concentrated on accompanying them 'in the field'. I would tag along for site visits, seedling planting, and community meetings. I took any opportunity I could to accompany field visits. The dynamics between technicians and rural Haitians were key interactions in understanding the implementation of aid projects. Early on, I appreciated the opportunity to squeeze into the back of an SUV, and get to know possible locations to focus on. My contact with IRO agronomists was facilitated by the approval of the directing staff members. But for smaller organizations, I relied on getting to know the presidents of groups and explaining over time what I was interested in and why.

I also conducted participant observation by spending time in the HOEA office. I sat in when expats came to the office, and when staff debated everything from projects to politics. The perspective that the technicians, agronomists, and directors gave was one that helped me to understand the issues of agronomy, botany, soil conservation, and Haitian history from a critical lens.

[21] A note of language: all conversations, unless noted otherwise, occurred in *Kreyòl*. Interviews with foreign aid workers occurred in English.

The majority of my time doing participant observation was spent with farmers. This was facilitated by trips to garden plots, or to take animals out to pasture. The selection for these key moments of participant observation was based on interlocutor referral. After hearing from another resident that I was interested in visiting garden plots, other willing farmers would take me with them to their plots, describe to me what they had planted, and answer my questions about soil movements, draughts, and floods as we walked through their gardens. While I was most interested in concepts of aid and soil conservation, holistically understanding planting, harvesting, and agricultural strategy was imperative. It was these moments that gave me time with male and female residents to understand further their lives in relation to land and agriculture. In addition, I accompanied farmers associations in their meetings. Sometimes I was the focal point of the meeting, other times, I sat in back and observed.

Participant observation allowed me to also physically participate in farming in the Haitian hillsides. For example, I helped out with weeding duties of a demonstration plot maintained by ATAD and funded by IRO. My first attempt to weed was an utter failure. I was told that I was doing it wrong, and my machete was taken away. A month or so later, I was given another opportunity. I was even entrusted with a machete to help Lebèl and Adàm clear the ground in the sapling nursery in Damòn. My efforts to keep up with my experienced agriculturalist colleagues garnered nods of appreciation, and more than a couple of open blisters. In addition to using a machete, my visits to high mountain gardens gave me a perspective on the far reaches of farming, where farmers would walk for hours to reach a small plot of land. Participating in these practices and trips, there was a certain bodily experience of farming in Haiti that I came to appreciate.

Interviews

My interviews focused on the three main groups in this study: agronomists/technicians, NGO administrators, and farmers. Informal interviews occurred throughout research, in moments of spontaneity, wherever and whenever I found myself under the shade of a tree with a group of people, or on a long car ride. These interviews were noted onto my jottings notebooks, and then translated into field notes on my small Netbook computer at night. During more formal interviews, many were recorded, though not all.[22] Formal interviews began with making an appointment, or presenting myself and asking if it would be possible to have an interview, or a *chita-pale* (a sit and talk).

NGO interviews were conducted largely in the offices of the corresponding NGO. While I conducted at least one formal semi-structured interview with each selected NGO employee, I often interacted with them regularly enough so that I could follow up with questions and stay up to date on any issues without too much of an imposition. With HOEA, I had a constant dialogue of questions and answers that would occur before, during, and after weekly meetings. With IRO, it was far more difficult to make time with many of the American managers and senior Haitian personnel, so I made specific appointments for those interviews. IHC employees were gracious enough to make themselves available when I stopped by the office in Lejè. My interviews with the field agronomists took place while walking through the countryside, and in car rides up and down the coast. I asked about their lives and work, about their thoughts on aid and development, and their prognosis of projects. On these often long walks we got to know one another, and shared stories and jokes.

[22] After some adverse reactions to audio taping in earlier research in the Dominican Republic, I found that the presence of the audio recorder was affecting interviews. While I shied away from recordings at the beginning of research, I developed ways to insert the recorder nonchalantly into conversations. I developed a confidence in showing the recorder to my interlocutors, and asking if they had any problems if I recorded the interview. After a number of positive responses, I began re-integrating audio recordings into interviews.

I also conducted an interview with the donor representative on her visit to Haiti. We met in Port au Prince, at the Hotel Montana, where she was staying. I was amazed at her awareness of the aid industry in Haiti. She had read much of the critical literature on aid in Haiti, and was frustrated with many aspects of how aid was advancing. She aspired to learn Kreyol, and had a critical view on all aspects of aid. Her reflective and thoughtful comments reminded me that detailed ethnographic research is essential to critically research aid, and to break out of assumptions about development professionals and donors (Lewis and Mosse 2006, Fechter and Hindman 2011).

Interviews with farmers ranged from long unstructured conversations to more formal structured interviews. The farmers I talked to and learned from were both men and women. Early in the morning, both genders walked out to the gardens to work. While the vast majority of my interactions with farmers were through unstructured conversations by which we learned about one another, I used a semi-structured interview format to incorporate the thoughts of approximately 90 residents in the Damòn area. The area of Damòn is delineated by its residents into three more densely populated areas: Ti Damòn, Gran Damòn, and Tisit. In the three regions of Ti Damòn, Gran Damòn, and Tisit, I conducted 30 interviews per zone. While the Damòn Communal Section encompasses more neighborhoods, they are far less populated; I did spend time visiting gardens and walking through those areas, but did not conduct focused interviews in the area. This interview asked for general information about land holdings and occupation, but was more broadly concerned with giving more explicit details to questions regarding projects and perceptions of soil conservation. I also used the interviews to get to know more people in the region and as an excuse to spend an extended amount of time with people. I conducted most of the interviews in the afternoon, as most were out in the morning working in their gardens.

## Data Analysis

Collecting and analyzing was simultaneous and iterative. Early reflections on the data, and emails to faculty mentors helped me to practice a series of 'memos' (Maxwell 2012). By talking through the early stages with aid workers, farmers, and neighbors, I slowly focused in on the important questions for my study. One key aspect in the ongoing process of data analysis was applying to a writing grant that required a completed first chapter of the dissertation. In the midst of this exercise, I was forced to narrow down my larger analysis two months before the end of research. Quickly, I had to review what information I had, what was lacking, and what had already emerged from the data.

In examining the 90+ interviews in the countryside, I used an excel spreadsheet to organize the information. I derived codes from the conceptual I developed a number of emic codes inductively. For example, I coded 'who' does soil conservation, using codes such as '*pwoje'* (projects), '*gwoup*' (farmers groups), or '*oganizasyon'* (organizations). In this case I then developed a second level of coding to understand if it originated external to the area in question. I also deductively developed codes from the conceptual framework in order to group responses as to if interlocutors understood soil conservation to be a 'positive' or 'good' intervention.

Upon completion of fieldwork and return to the United States, I consulted both field notes and interview transcriptions. I read over them multiple times. As I did so, I dragged the emerging themes into another document, composing a first round of analysis that pulled out

salient moments, themes, and people. Revising that document, and consulting back to my original field notes, the data most relevant to my study slowly emerged into chapters.

## *The Structure of the Dissertation*

This dissertation unfolds in six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two will trace soil erosion as a problem that obligates specific solutions. The movement of soil in Haiti becomes a way to talk about the global forms of development through a specific historical and ethnographic subject. This story begins with interventions originating in the United States, and how they spread. The 1930s dustbowl crisis in the United States constitutes a moment of simultaneous environmental panic and policy opportunity, where forms of broad state lead soil conservation were championed. Word of environmental catastrophe and the US government response made their way around the globe, particularly to British colonial governments. By the late 1940s, definitions of environmental degradation in Haiti create the discursive definitions of environmental need and underdevelopment, fostering an environment of documents in which soil conservation as a 'solution' can blossom. But from their origin in the Rooseveltian New Deal, these 'technical' solutions are deeply entwined with the administrative grouping of the project.

In Chapter Three, the story of soil conservation becomes a story of projects. For farmers such as Jan Franswa, soil conservation in Haiti has been a history of projects, and one cannot be understood without the other. In fact, contemporary rural Haiti cannot be understood without understanding the project itself. The focus on 'projectification' analyzes this phenomenon. Projects are far broader than soil conservation in rural Haiti, demanding the attention and focus

of rural organizations striving for scarce resources. Not only are organizations captivated and altered by the project, so are individuals. Livelihood strategies in the countryside change as individuals move from project to project throughout their lives. NGOs become equally concerned about the production of projects for financial continuity. Without the production of successful projects, the economy of the project would falter. Therefore, the production of successful projects is essential.

Chapter Four analyzes how the production of successful projects occurs through processes of the audit. The production of success for projects relies on a set of processes that ensure a financial accountability at the expense of other types of appraisal. As a result, an 'audit culture' has pervaded the design, implementation, and assessment of soil conservation. These processes are structured around what is financially visible and audible, and focusing on the 'successful' while ignoring indicators of that which may challenge success. By highlighting these highly financialized reporting performances, soil conservation and projects more broadly have become 'successful' despite concerning evidence to the contrary. Examining this process illuminates the way that for years, 'ineffective' soil conservation has been allowed to propagate through the form of the project. With this repetition of specific soil conservation projects in spite of questionable evidence to the contrary, there are important ramifications on daily life in the countryside.

Chapter Five analyzes the changes brought by the project in terms of the norms in the countryside, and examines the way that this constitutes new forms of government. After years of 'growing accustomed' to the way that contour canals enter through projects, farmers in the countryside report that they will almost never construct contour canals on their own, noting that such work is reserved for NGOs or 'projects'. Soil conservation projects do not succeed in

attempts to discipline farmers' actions: farmers rarely maintain or adopt the canal strategy for themselves. But despite this failing, the continual insertion of projects does establish a 'way of things' such that farmers agree on a division of labor: farmers do not build canals without NGOs and projects. These norms of conduct are indicative of a diffuse but profound way that projects restructure relationships between individuals. Rather than result in populations permeated with environmental concern, these diffuse forms of governing foster concern for the logic of the project itself.

By way of conclusion, I bring together the various assemblages and networks that have wound their way into the everyday life of the Haitian countryside. Over a period of sixty years, contour canals have been inserted into Haitian soils, unsuccessfully attempting to limit the slow movements of soil off of hillsides. Such repeated impositions constitute a negligence of both rural residents and the very real state of land degradation in rural Haiti. More broadly, this work adds to existing literature by insisting upon the way that the project imposes often unseen logics of its own. Doing so not only undermines the intentions of conservation and development, but constitutes a diffuse and intense mode of power.

# CHAPTER TWO: The Uses of Soil: Histories of Conservation, Degradation, and Control

This chapter traces how problems have been assembled, and how problem definitions have led to particular solutions. Visual evidence of environmental degradation in Haiti is ubiquitous. The barren hillsides, exposed bedrock, and swelling rivers align with Haitians' own stories of how hillsides once full of coffee trees are now naked. Farmers obliged to continually work land find it losing soil and fertility. The land that has grown too parched and empty is described as *fini* (finished). Large ravines, formed by years of torrential water flows and little vegetative cover crack through valleys. The movements of soil and the dearth of trees are palpable. But the way that this reality becomes defined as a particular problem of population and farming practices obligates a specific set of solutions.

This chapter illustrates the way that soil, trees, farmers, populations, and agronomists become assembled into a coherent narrative. This global grouping of actors intersects with definitions of Haiti as a degraded place and degraded people, mapping definitions of environmental degradation onto human fertility. By assembling actors in certain ways, experts come to create particular problems. The way that environmental degradation comes to be understood is the result of a great deal of work translating human and non-human actors into coherent processes and causal links.

Emerging in different times and places, ideas about population growth and degradation intersect with concepts of how to control degradation through the control of farmers. In this chapter, I first introduce the key concepts of political ecology as they apply to soil degradation and conservation. Political ecology's emergence and importance in the 1980s is largely based in its refutation of prevailing themes of population growth as related to environmental degradation and loss. Following this discussion, I will outline how population growth was linked to

environmental degradation more globally, and how it became localized in Haiti. As Haiti became a site to be 'developed' through foreign aid, the global trends of population growth as tied to the environment were mapped onto Haiti and Haitians. Doing so moves the frame of debate from resource extraction and the flow of commodities to explanations that blame the 'overly fertile Haitian masses' and female Haitian bodies. I examine how this type of problematization through aid research sets the conditions for the assemblage of soil conservation (with its technicians, structures, and assumptions) to permeate soils of Haiti. As soil conservation enters, it does so through the administrative units of 'the project', which propagate the short term nature of the interventions. As these practices and procedures enter into Haiti, they set the stage for over sixty years of soil conservation interventions.

Along with the first international aid sent to Haiti by UNESCO in 1949,[23] environmental degradation was high on the list of what would be targeted by international agencies. Starting in 1949, Alfred Métraux, whose research would direct the course of the UNESCO intervention, attributed poverty in the valley to three main causes: soil erosion caused by rapid deforestation, small landholdings that prohibited the use of technologies such as the plow, and the over-population of the region that placed excessive pressure on the land (Mètraux 1951:2). From the earliest moments of the encounter between Haitians and international aid, soil conservation has been a key aspect of development, and its problematization has been intricately linked to population growth and environmental degradation.

A solution only exists in its relationship to a problem, or a problem definition. For Michel Callon (1986), one of the early theorizers of actor network theory, the process of creating a problem is intimately related to its solution. By examining how science and technology define

[23] The UNESCO pilot project was conceived of by young US educator Emmanuel Gabriel Jean-Francois. He attended a conference in Paris in which plans for technical assistance were being proposed. Jean-Francois then convinced the Estimé government to apply for the assistance (Efron 1955)

problems we can begin to see that what occurs is a structuring of power relationships. The creation of a problem, the *problematization*, is a work of mobilization. Actors are mobilized and defined in such a way as to bring a particular problem to life. For the environmental degradation of Haiti, it is not only the existence of degradation, but how that degradation is defined. Researchers looking to involve Haiti's population growth as an actor in the problem do not only have a different perspective, they have created a *different problem*. For a pre-political ecology of the Haitian soil landscape, Malthusian fears of population pressure mobilize particular actors as part of the problem, maintaining a scope of analysis limited to the farmers, agronomists, and soil conservation experts. This problem definition requires a particular kind of response. As ideas about degradation become entrenched, farmers become grouped, soil is perceived in a certain way, and Haiti becomes ensnared in global discourses of degradation and conservation.

## *The Political Ecology of Soil Erosion*

Inquiring into the problematics of soil degradation and conservation is arguably how the frame of political ecology coalesced. Eric Wolf's (1972) use of 'political ecology' was an effort to bridge land-use and the global political economy, connecting the progression of capitalism to rules of land ownership and surrounding ecosystems. In the 1980s, Blaikie (1981, 1985), and Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) turned to soil degradation as indicative of this intersection between environment and political economy. In their analysis, Blaikie and Brookfield establish the source of erosion not as the simple relationship between farmer and land, but rather examine the underlying extractive nature of the relations that permit erosion to occur. Such a theoretical

framing was a calculated deviation from previous analyses that hinged on population growth as causally related to degradation. At the time he wrote, Piers Blaikie (1981) observed that previous analysis of soil erosion had included only a limited number of actors: farmers, agronomists, and soil conservation experts. Without a more holistic scope, the issues of soil conservation could become isolated to 'on farm' factors, or worse, made into problems of 'environment,' and void of a larger political context. This framing, one that incorporates not only domestic but also international processes of accumulation and dispossession, illuminates the flow of natural resources from the Haitian countryside into Haitian urban centers and colonial and neocolonial metropolitan centers abroad.

Degradation and erosion can be explained, Blaikie (1981) argues, by surplus extraction through the social relations of production and the sphere of exchange. Therefore, any place-specific examination must be joined with a larger analysis of the political economy. Part of such an analysis is incorporating an examination of marginalization. Marginalized individuals are often forced, through larger social problems of de-capitalization for example, onto marginalized land, hoping to use that land to produce surplus for the purchase of necessary commodities. This means increased stress on the marginalized land as it is used to produce surplus. As land then becomes further degraded and overworked, even more labor is required to produce at the same level, creating a cycle of land degradation rooted in the global political economy (Blaikie 1981). Key in the analysis presented by Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) is the additional focus on the land manager. This methodological turn considers the actions of the land manager not only in relationship to the land, but to broader forces: "Land managers may find themselves responding to changes in their social, political and economic circumstances quite independently of changes in the intrinsic properties of the land which they employ" (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987).

Image: The deforested hills of Haiti (Photo by author)

This framing of land degradation illuminates the environmental history of Haiti. It poses a contrast to some of the more popular conceptions of how Haiti has become deforested. Notably, Jared Diamond's popular book "Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed" (2005) frames Haiti's environmental failures in terms of the Dominican Republic's 'successes'. Diamond's analysis of degradation ignores foreign involvement, blaming a deficient government, and high population density. But detailed historical analysis of degradation proves that such a scope is both inaccurate and misleading.

Haiti's environmental exploitation begins most fundamentally with the colonization of the island.[24] With colonization began a pattern of extraction leading to accumulation in far-away metropoles. Beginning with Columbus' exploits in the new world, lush forests were cleared for settlements and while in 1690 there were no sugar plantations, within fifteen years, there were

[24] Certainly pre-Columbian indigenous groups used natural resources to their benefit. However, colonization introduced environmental exploitation at a far greater level.

120, and by 1789 (the eve of the revolution) colonial Saint Domingue had well over 1000 plantations (Fick 2000). To feed the processing of sugar cane, which required constant wood for boilers, coastal mahogany forests were cleared for fuel (Paravisini-Gebert 2011). Therefore, it was not only the land on which sugar cane was planted that was exploited, so too was the surrounding forest.[25]

After Haiti's independence in 1804, European countries along with the newly independent United States economically isolated the black republic.[26] Soon after, in 1825 France asserted that the price to open economic trade would be a debt so great that Haiti would be paying it until the end of the 20th century (Farmer 2004). To begin to pay this indemnity, forests of logwood and mahogany were logged aggressively and exported across the Atlantic to France, and thus the repayment of debt occurred at the expense of Haiti's forests and its people (Paskett and Philoctete 1990).

During the US occupation (1915-1934), the occupying administration encouraged environmental exploitation. Forests were cleared to build roads, and roads facilitated access to more remote areas that could then be cleared (Mouhot 2011). Continuing after the occupation, in 1943 Haiti's lands were used for the extraction of materials, most notably rubber trees, which saw 47,177 acres cleared for the planting of rubber to benefit the United States (MJ Smith 2009). But the purchase of rubber from Haiti never happened, and the displacement and clearing was not only devastating to landowners, but fruitless.

Almost imperceptibly over the past century, larger economic strain has contributed to degrading soils in rural Haiti. Such a long-term and imperceptible destruction of environments

[25] The early rulers of independent Haiti continued the violent plantation economy. But as early as 1809, Alexandre Pétion began redistributing land and breaking up plantations. In the face of growing resistance the plantation economy could not be maintained (see Fick 2000).

[26] As mentioned in the introduction, while Haiti's leaders hoped to continue the plantation economy, rural Haitians resisted and preferred to work their small parcels of land.

occurs out of sight and over long periods of time, a sort of "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) that has often occurred at the hands of the rural smallholders, confusing broader causes of degradation. In post-revolution Haiti, the subsistence activities of farmers were expressions of freedom in opposition to plantation labor imposed through slavery and by early leaders (such as Christophe and Dessalines) (Fick 2000). After President Pétion and Boyer's land reform, it was possible that by 1842, no large plantations were owned, as they had all been divided (Farmer 1988). But even outside of a plantation economy, the labors and products of rural peasants have long been appropriated by urban and foreign markets. As farmers produced commodities to be sold, they became ensnared in the world system. Peasants in need of cash for necessary commodities could not resist the continuous extraction of their surplus. Into the 20th century the products of the peasantry have been heavily taxed, such that much of the wealth of urban merchants and the state comes at the expense of rural populations (see Farmer 1988).

Two main issues tie this economic expropriation to land degradation. First, with few other ways in which to create value, farmers turn to the land as the primary source of food and income. Doing so with such desperation forced people to seek out what would previously be 'marginalized' lands: steeply sloping, and not ideally suited for non-tree-based agriculture. Farmers then cleared hillsides, deforesting them and tilling the soils for whatever they could produce. Working steep landsides year after year proved detrimental to soil fertility and cover, as continual tilling exposes soil to wind and rain erosion (Blanco and Lal 2010). The demands on Haitian soil are compounded by current international tariff agreements that place the small surplus created by farmers at a disadvantage. In 1995 the tariffs on rice were lowered from 35% to 3%,[27] precipitating the increased importation of subsidized US rice— this had profoundly

[27] Through intense pressure by President Bill Clinton (Dupuy 2010).

deleterious consequences for Haitian rice farmers and the 200 small rice mills throughout the country (Shamsie 2012). While rice was once a food to be eaten occasionally (on Sunday, for example), its inexpensive cost has undercut other crops such as maize and sorghum, making rice a daily food choice throughout Haiti, and contributing to the continual struggle of hillside farmers to find income.

The second, and perhaps more publicized impact on Haiti's environment, is the charcoal industry. The charcoal industry is often seen as the most detrimental industry to the environment. However, this is debated by those who argue that agriculture contributes far more to environmental degradation (Shannon 2003). Haiti's energy economy uses biomass (mostly trees) for cooking fuel; liquid propane gas (LPG) is a very small percentage of the total energy consumed (World Bank 2007). Charcoal is easily transported, does not require the upfront investment of a propane tank, nor does it involve the possibility of tank explosion. It is the most common energy source in urban areas. In the countryside, heavy and relatively difficult-to-transport wood is used for cooking, not the light but inefficient charcoal. Towards the 1930s and 1940s, fuel used for cooking was gathered close to the area of consumption. In the 1980s, export oriented manufacturing and declines in the agricultural sector led many rural Haitians to gravitate to where wealth had been historically amassed: in the cities (Portés et al. 1994). With the continual movement of resources from the countryside to the urban centers, rural migrants followed and urban populations have continued to grow. Now fuel sources in urban environments originate far away from their point of consumption. Cooking fuel is yet another example of the extraction of resources from the countryside. Charcoal, the most common fuel in cities and towns,[28] is made by cutting down trees and burying them in an earthen kiln,

[28] Approximately 80% of urban homes use charcoal (World Bank 2007).

smoldering them in a dearth of oxygen. While this process makes the resulting charcoal easier to transport, and produce less smoke, a 2007 study by the World Bank estimates charcoal produced in Haiti has only approximately 10-12% of the energy of wood. Therefore, households (mostly rural) using firewood for cooking use fewer trees than those using charcoal (mostly urban). Charcoal produced in the countryside is then a potential income resource for rural residents. But as reported by many of my interlocutors, the low income generation potential makes it a choice only for those who are in dire economic straits.

The foundational work of political ecology is of utmost importance in widening the gaze to the broader structural conditions that propagate erosion. More contemporary work by West (2006), Li (2007), and Sachs (1993) examines a process of problematization that development institutions must somehow "solve." Particular frameworks of conservation undermine local population's visions for development (West 2006), often falling into discourses of 'improvement' that justify the presence of experts and their visions for controlling nature (Li 2007). The issues of erosion therefore become "translated" (Latour 2005) into problems that place non-governmental organizations as the solution. Prior to Blaikie's (1981 and 1985) analysis and the work of Blaikie and Brookfeld (1987), soil conservation interventions disregarded this type of political economic context. Soil conservation projects and technologies were developed not to radically change the system of extraction that targets hillsides, but rather to deal only with the farmers themselves. If we follow Blaikie's analysis, we would be lead to changes so fundamental and diffuse "no wonder, then that a narrow technical approach seems more attractive" (Blaikie 1981:75).

## *A History of Population and Environmental Degradation*

The first waves of a global environmentalism in the 1960s were dominated by Malthusian thinking and analogies (Mills 2008, Ehrlich 1968, Hardin 1968, Robertson 2012). In 1798, Thomas Malthus argued that the growth of the population would soon outstrip the available food supply. He argued that the geometric growth of the population (2, 4, 8, 16) would not be met by the 'arithmetic' growth of agriculture (1, 2, 3, 4). Ultimately, his argument was about curbing poverty through the control of reproduction. His arguments held that the poor were to blame for their own condition because they lacked the self-restraint to limit their family's growth in size. The 1950s and 60s saw a revival of the ideas of Thomas Malthus, and fears of "The Population Bomb" (Ehrlich 1968) rose to the level of public debate and policy (Robbins 2012). But the environmental movements of the mid 20th century were not the first time that Malthus' arguments had resurfaced.

The self-proclaimed neo-Malthusian movement emerged in Europe and the United States in the early 1900s. Rather than Malthus' arguments of sexual restraint, neo-Malthusians (in both France and England) advocated for contraception as a pathway to curbing the growth of the impoverished masses (Accampo 2003). Early population debates began to creep into the environment as well. In 1923, Edward East wrote "Mankind at the Crossroads," a text that outlined explicitly the connection between soil erosion and population growth. His text maintained that the way of limiting the loss of soil fertility was through population control, a form of regulation embraced by the burgeoning neo-Malthusian movements at the time (Robertson 2012) The neo-Malthusian movements of England began to incorporate eugenic principles, and became concerned not only with the urban poor in the metropole but began to look across the seas to control the growing populations of countries far away, most notably for

the British, in India (Rao 1994). In 1925 and 1927 Margaret Sanger[29] brought neo-Malthusians and Eugenicists together. They argued that halting the multiplication of the poor and 'unfit' at home and abroad was a step towards race betterment (Rao 1994). Sterilizations along race and class lines were increasingly offered as answers to questions of poverty and development (Stern 2005). The eugenics movement fell out of favor after the fall of Nazi Germany, whose ideals of racial superiority were the logical extensions of the Eugenics movement. However, the turn to population control continued in a particular racialized way, as fears of population growth became fears of poor black and brown bodies (Stern 2005). Taken abroad, such discourses and policies would create conditions for family planning 'choices' under which certain decisions were imposed (Maternowska 2006, Ali 2002)

Post-war interest in 'development' and the fast route to industrialization, compounded by the fears of communism in post-colonial nations, helped population control became the new focus of post-war Rockefeller and Ford Foundation funding (Rao 1994). Population studies programs of emerged at US Universities such as the University of Michigan. The addition of substantial funding changed a small group of scholars sharing an interest in a subject to a "substantial group of researchers attempting to solve a crisis of their own making" (Rao 1994:48). After convening a series of conferences based on the link between poverty and population growth in India, in 1952 Margaret Sanger and Rama Rao founded the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The fear of population growth and its links to poverty soon entered the World Bank and the White House, where academic framings would affect policy. Divorced from eugenic language and attached to the idea of development, demographers such as Kingsley Davis (1968) pushed concepts of population control as a component of US aid. The

[29] Margaret Sanger established the organizations that would evolve into Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

amount of funding increased tremendously: population control funding in USAID increased from 10.5 million in 1965 to 123 million in 1972 (Rao 1994). The population fears of the 50s and 60s, ensconced in academic studies and institutional practice, became even more publicized with Paul Ehrlich's publication of "The Population Bomb" (1968), which brought the question of population growth and global resources to a broader audience.[30]

While not immediately present in many of these discourses, women, through their fertility, are implicit as a cause of environmental degradation. Feminist groups mobilized in the early 1990s to address the accusatory link between fertility and degradation (Cohen 1993). The parallel strands of environmental degradation and the regulation of women's bodies came to an intersection in 1994 at the UN International Conference on Population and Development. That conference marked a turning point for population planning discourse: female empowerment was chosen as the preferred discourse to population control when discussing family planning. Yet even with this reframing of 'empowerment', the Cairo consensus left intact a deeply problematic relationship between family planning and environmental degradation (Hartman 2006). Preceding that conference, women's health activists (concerned about coercive population control) partnered with population agencies to forge an agreement. This consensus held that population growth is still a major cause of poverty and environmental degradation, but that the solution comes through women's empowerment and reproductive health (Hartman 2006). We then see that through such international summits, the regulation and control of women's bodies maintain primacy in narratives of environmental degradation.

[30] But the idea of the population bomb was countered by Esther Boserup's work (1965, 1981). Boserup challenged the idea that agricultural technologies were fixed variables. Rather, her work argued that it was in fact population that determined agricultural methods in the first place. As such, the changing population landscape would facilitate alternative agricultural innovations, bringing increased food production.

This concern over the control of growing populations, especially the growth of poor and 'dark' populations, made its way into the problematization of Haiti's environment. The first development texts, principally the UN Mission Report to Haiti (1949) describes how: "'an expanding population on shrinking land resources,' must become the central concern of developmental planning in Haiti" (Friedman 1955:43). Such population fears have kept a strong focus on demographic control (Maternowska 2006). The type of research that has been produced on Haiti's environment continued to apply population concerns and focus problem definitions in terms of development.[31] Since the 1950s, the primary 'academic' literature on Haiti's environment has been funded and carried out by development institutions and contracted academics, addressing the environment in Haiti as a potential for development projects.

In the 1970s, such anthropological engagements with the environment continued to latch on to frames of population growth. One of the most prominent anthropologists to work on issues of deforestation in Haiti, and largely credited with one of the most noted applications of anthropology (*Pwoje Pyebwa*- The Agroforestry Outreach Project), was Gerald Murray. Before moving to USAID funded research projects, Murray's anthropology dissertation (1977) established population growth as one of the primary problematics of the Haitian countryside. His work was not entirely financially separate from the existing development agenda: Murray's research was funded largely by a USAID funded Overseas Population Internship in the Department of Population Planning at the University of Michigan (Murray 1977). He framed his own writing as revisionist, writing against those who had come before him and attempting to

[31] Such trends begin with the work of Alfred Métraux (1951), the first anthropologist in Haiti to breach the line between academic research and development practice (Schuller 2009). Métraux's thematic shift from vodou to education and 'development' for the UN marks a moment where anthropological styles of writing Haiti take a decidedly 'scientific' turn. Such a turn deviated from anthropological writings previously interested in cultural traits and African survivals (Melville Herskovits (1937)), and the refutation of biological determinism (Jean Price-Mars (1983) [1928]). But with Mètraux comes a pivot whereby anthropological engagements are produced for the utility of development institutions.

move past analytics that centered on the types of primitivism attributed to Haitian rulers. Rather, he argued that "a more sophisticated contemporary caricature involves, not political savagery, but rather the image of impending Malthusian doomsday, an island population is seen as over-producing itself" (1977:4). Murray's work attempted to bring attention to the "excessively fertile masses" (1977:4). While he eschewed caricatures of the hungry black hordes, he saw internal population growth as a primary problematic of the countryside, and one that had contributed to agrarian adaptations. In doing so, he cited the ability of anthropology not necessarily to provide policy opportunities, but rather to reframe the terms by which the problem was defined.

Post-1980, USAID continued to fund research that presented population growth as an intimate part of environmental change in Haiti. Many studies and reports continued to warn of the limited resource base and a sharply rising island population (Devres USAID 1990, Blemur et al. 1987, White and Jickling 1995). In the late 80s, population growth and a dearth of urban employment was seen as tied to both deforestation and soil erosion (Bloch 1988). White and Jickling (1995) saw the major issues facing peasants as limited access to production resources, limited opportunities for off land employment, and economic and social insecurity— however, in their analysis population growth is the culprit of each of these countryside limitations. Other reports frame population growth in terms of the "carrying capacity" of the land (Bannister and Josiah 1993). Even when Haiti's population growth has not always seen as the primary cause for poverty and environmental degradation, it has often played a key role. In addition to fearful citations of population density and carrying capacity, small plots and insecure land tenure have also been cited as problems for the environment and for conservation interventions (Ochs et al. 1979). A lack of off farm employment is also seen to be a primary component when mixed with growing population (Dolisca et al. 2007). Occasionally introduced into the literature is the terrain

of Haiti, the mountainous physical countryside which constrains particular forms of agriculture (Pellek 1992). Population increase and soil degradation are often posited as having a fixed relationship in the minds of researchers. For example, the midterm evaluation document for "*Projè Sove Tè"* [sic] (Project Save the Land, financed by USAID 1987-1991) defended the necessity of the project by arguing that because the population had increased, soil erosion was increasing and affecting the rural resource base (Associates in Rural Development 1990). The lines between anthropological research and aid assessments are blurred, and have dominated the environmental debate in Haiti.

More recent environmental research in Haiti extends this intellectual thread, and holds that Haiti's population growth is to blame for the worsening environmental crises. For example, in a USAID funded research venture carried out by the aid contracting firm of Chemonics International, it was written that "[a]ny serious effort to mitigate Haiti's environmental crisis must directly address Haiti's dominant population trends — rapid population growth and rapid urbanization…This argues for a national effort to reduce population growth and mitigate environmentally destructive patterns of urbanization" (Smucker et al. 2007:11). Smucker et al.'s report argues that "family planning services should be directly integrated with other program interventions to protect watersheds and other natural resources" (2007:12). Contemporary institutions continue to feed off of the 'threat' of Haiti's growing population as the potential for chaos: "the combination of environmental destruction and other factors such as weak institutions, extreme poverty and rapid population growth raise the risk of serious new trouble in the island republic" (International Crisis Group 2009). Applying such a thesis to environmental degradation still occupies the attention of development funding institutions such as USAID, an institution that uses health and environmental projects as a discrete way finance population control (BLH

Technologies Inc 2013). These programs posit that through family planning, population growth and therefore environmental degradation will be lessened.

Marxist critiques of Malthusianism, such as those made by political ecologists Blaikie and Brookfield (1985), argue that such theories reify the social relations involved in both consumption and production. That is, the relationships between poor and rich, urban and rural, workers and bourgeois, are taken as the 'natural' way of things. For Malthus, such relationships were best represented by the divides between rich and poor. While the poor masses were characterized by their uncontrolled breeding, the upper classes regulated their numbers by prudent copulation (Harvey 1974). Such assertions argue that the differences between rich and poor not are not caused by social and economic forces, but are rather the 'nature' of things. If we challenge that assertion, as critical scholarship has done (Mamdani 1972, Rao 1994, Gimenez 1977, Harvey 1979), then we reveal not only the social relations of production and consumption, but also unravel the environmental assertion that individuals near to degradation are ultimately responsible for that degradation.

The possibility that population growth eats into resources masks who among that population is actually consuming the resources (Rao 1994). Demographic research in the 1980s refuted the idea that economic 'growth' is hindered by population growth (see Simon 1984, Preston 1984). Rather, the movement of capital (in this case, natural resources) is the most salient frame. Capital is highly mobile, which means the space in which environmental degradation occurs is often not simultaneously the source of that degradation. For Neil Smith, "Human activity does not restructure space; it simply rearranges objects in space" (1984:2). While degradation occurs in the hillsides of Haiti through deforestation and overworking of land,

the causes of that degradation are ultimately the economic system in which the resources of the countryside are expropriated by urban centers and foreign powers.

The regulation of the bodies of the "excessively fertile masses" becomes a prescription that reifies and naturalizes the lot of the Haitian peasantry as subservient to the economic needs of the urban and elite; but to be specific, it is not just the masses that are being regulated but women's bodies. The space of environmental degradation is indeed located in the deforested hillsides. However, to ascribe the ultimate causes of deforestation onto those spaces, and onto the 'multiplying' bodies in those spaces, is an epistemological error. For colonial logging ventures, mahogany extraction, and the rural support of urban energy consumption through charcoal, relationships of production and consumption, and the paths of capital, need our full analytical examination. The ascription of population growth as a primary factor in the environmental degradation of Haiti provides a mask with which the social relations of production are hidden. The attempt to frame the problem of degradation in terms of the gendered multiplication of rural bodies is an attempt to regulate and control those female bodies. Such emphasis on control and regulation echoes the desire to control the farming practices of rural Haitians through organized and planned interventions into soil conservation.

## *A History of Soil Conservation*

Before examining soil conservation in Haiti, I examine first the rise of soil conservation in the United States, and the development of a perspective that would come to define many state and non-governmental approaches to erosion control. State led soil conservation grew to global prominence in the early 20$^{th}$ century. Certainly, strategies to combat soil erosion had developed

far earlier: indigenous people have long used a variety of strategies to mitigate soil erosion (Pretty and Shah 1997). However, in the early 20th century, a global movement of soil conservation arose largely after the Great Depression, bolstered by fears of worldwide desertification and the phenomenon of the 'Dust Bowl' of the central United States (Anderson 1984). Early institutional interventions (prominent through the late 1980s) depended largely on the construction of physical structures. Primary among these structures, the 'tools' of soil conservation, were contour canals. Often, they are referred to by the mounds on top of the canal: bunds, billons, or simply mounds.[32] The ditches and corresponding soil mounds require substantial investments of labor, and mark a key component of soil conservation in Haiti. Their placement along the contour is intended to slow and stop the water-induced erosion (see figure below). Contour canals are marked both by their prominence as an individual intervention and their combination with tree/crop planting for stability. Much of this dissertation will refer back to contour canals as specific soil conservation interventions.

[32] Occasionally interventions will build simply mounds, but more often they are paired with a canal/ditch of varying depth.

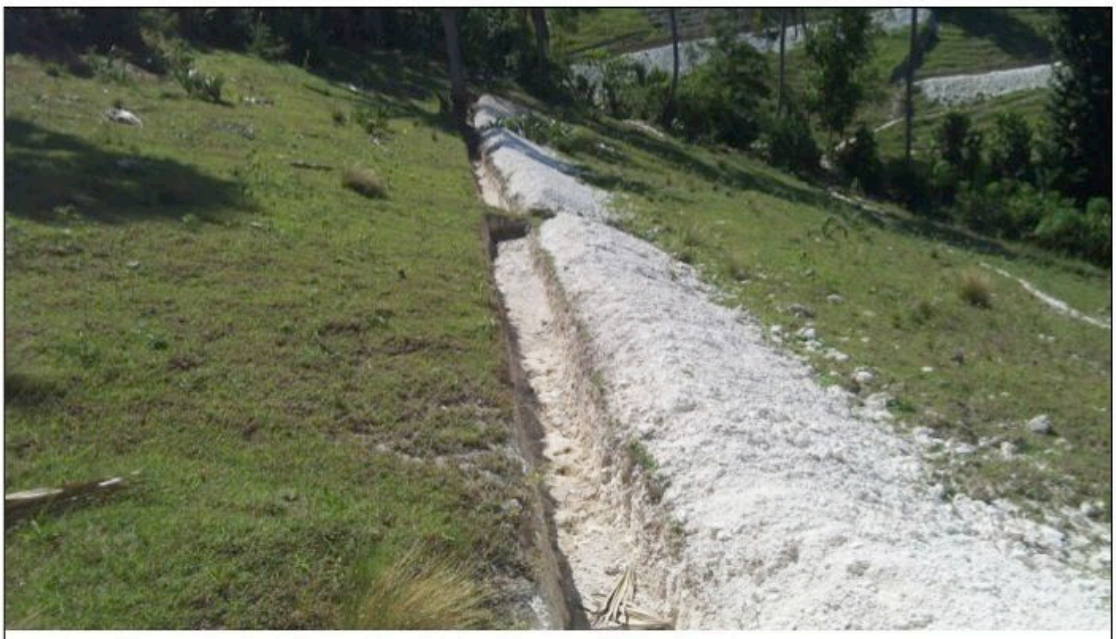

Image: Contour canals in Lejè.

As a type of global assemblage, contour canals are an abstractable, mobile, and dynamic phenomena that come to define "new material, collective, and discursive relationships" (Ong and Collier 2004:4). In tracing the origins of contour canals in Haiti, we can better understand the trends of both propagation and (non)adoption. By expanding the frame to contour canals more broadly geographically and historically, the canals are revealed as phenomena that encompass scientific research, geographically dispersed experts and farmers, political control, soils, and environmental ideologies. Contour canals in Haiti are perhaps better understood then as a localized instantiation of a multi-local network of ideals and actors. The literature that has been produced about soil conservation should therefore not be examined not as 'truth' as such. Soil conservation as an assemblage, and with its problematizations of degradation, should be taken not as a 'matter of fact' but a 'matter of concern,' in which uncertainties about the nature of

groups, actions, objects, facts, and science all become necessary targets of inquiry (Latour 2005). Making soil conservation a matter of concern requires understanding the ways in which it has been translated and imagined, and how those moments and movements brought contour canals to Haiti.

Soil conservation as a technical intervention has occurred largely within the frame of modernization, rooted in and driven by positivist science (Pretty and Shah 1997, Harvey 1989). Within such frameworks, scientists and planners identify the problem that needs solving, rational solutions are proposed, and technologies known to work because of controlled research are proposed as alternatives to farmers' existing practices. The fundamental assumption behind such modernist approaches to agriculture is that the diverse practices of farmers are not as effective as the technologies imposed by external institutions (Pretty and Shah 1997).

State level concern for soil conservation began in the United States in the 19th century (Bennett 1939, Pretty and Shah 1994). In the US, indigenous groups had long used built structures to reduce erosion. Native American farming cultures used strategies such as strategic field location (near run-off), and contour plant hedges for at least 1500 years in the greater Southwest United States (Pretty and Shah 1997). However, such structures were ignored by modern conservationists. While various indigenously conceived structures seem ubiquitous in both the United States and abroad, institutionally imposed conservation sought interventions that had been tested and sanctioned by empirically positivist science. Such efforts sought uniformity and order in farming practices, which may have been quite different from the practices of indigenous groups. In the United States, the concept of using ditches along the contour was first used by Nicholas Sorsby in the mid-1800s, who not only advocated contour based planting, but

the digging of contour canals that would be measured by use of the level in order to give a uniform shape (Helms 1991, McDonald 1941).

It was not until the Dust Bowl of the 1930s that broad state-led initiatives brought technologies such as canals together in broad implementation. Hugh Hammond Bennett's (1939) concerns of soil erosion in the Southern United States rose to prominence because of the wide ranging dust storms. Because of the Dust Bowl, soil erosion was not just a national problem, but rose to prominence as the first global environmental problem (Anderson 1984). In 1933, Bennett had been given US$5 million from the Public Works Administration (PWA) funds (part of New Deal social welfare funding) to begin work on soil conservation (Kelly 1985). But even before this, his eyes were on Navajo lands as a potential experimental site for the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. While Bennett was convinced of the need for soil conservation, what he really needed was demonstration plots in order to scientifically test his ideas (Helms 2010). He had difficulty in negotiating agreements with private landowners, as most were hesitant to let government personnel and equipment come onto their land. So when an opportunity presented itself to target Navajo reservations in the Southwest, Bennett leapt at the opportunity to implement his soil conservation interventions and experiments (Pretty and Shah 1997). Indian Commissioner John Collier had contacted Bennett, as Collier was eager to use the Navajo reservation in New Mexico as a showcase for Indian reforms; the pairing with conservation measures would be a perfect opportunity to do so (Kelley 1985). Bennett only needed the consent of the government officials and cursory approval by a tribal council (presented through an interpreter).

Upon implementation of the projects with the Navajo, it quickly became apparent that the reforms were not only based on particular assumptions about soil movements, they

fundamentally depended on a conceptualization of farmers as detrimental to the land itself. The divisions of labor that were imposed by the soil conservation interventions saw college trained technicians directing the technical aspects of the projects, while the Navajo whose land was being experimented on were reduced to laborers in the fields (Pretty and Shah 1997). There was an intensely negative reaction by the Navajo, not only to the removal of their sheep and goat flocks (which had been bought off by the government for their supposed contribution to degradation), but to all programs that were facilitated by the Indian office. It was at this point that the Indian Office began to recognize that soil conservation was not a simple matter of engineering, but was an intensely social and political act (Kelly 1985). Navajo lands had been used because private owners declined. When imposed on Navajos, they rejected the interventions. But with the passage of the Soil Conservation Act of 1935, Bennett's efforts at imposed soil conservation were assured permanence. With the global notoriety of the Dust Bowl, and the entrenchment of coercive soil conservation programs, the stage was set for the spread of a new discipline.

As demographic concerns spread throughout other areas, Bennet's soil conservation methods became attractive as a mobile set of deployable concepts and expertise. Throughout British-controlled Africa for example, erosion was noted as a problem in the 1870s, though concern over farmers and farming practices didn't grow until the turn of the 20$^{th}$ century. By the 1930s, environmental degradation fears had grown, particularly from the international alarm caused by the Dust Bowl. But along with this were pressures of population and herd growth, and fear of drought. Growing African populations threatened European settlers' land claims, moving British Colonial administrators towards the adoption of soil conservation policies in their African Colonies (Anderson 1984). White settlers blamed indigenous Africans for the erosion of the soil

despite evidence that externally introduced cereal monoculture was the culprit of soil exhaustion and declining fertility (Anderson 1984). For the settlers, the actual cause of land degradation was less important than the highly racialized debate of land use in Kenya.

Trips were made from Eastern Africa to the United States and South Africa to observe the imposed conservation methods, and thus the American set of interventions began traveling around the world (Anderson 1984, Pretty and Shah 1997). Ensuring compliance with pre-measured contours and pre-determined planting cycles was a primary goal of these conservation methods. The final step for the soil conservation program in Kenya was the forced resettlement of farmers where they could be more easily observed. In Kenya, more than one million people were moved to new linear settlements, a stark contrast to the then existing patterns of rural life (Huxley 1960).

Colonial authorities declared that the farmers were to blame, and looked to the United States for technical guidance on large-scale erosion interventions. But the United States barely had expertise to speak of. As Anderson (1984) notes, the Americans had caused one of the largest 'man made' environmental catastrophes, and were simply developing a set of strategies to deal with it: "In a sense there were no 'experts': just those who were doing something" (Anderson 1984:69). As previously noted, the first forays of Hugh Bennett's soil conservation were vociferously rejected. But with its incorporation into Rooseveldt's New Deal funding, soil conservation was solidified as a 'solution' to environmental catastrophe.

Throughout the broad geographic implementation of large scale soil conservation, many of the interventions quite simply do not work in the way that they are intended. In India, specifically in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Mysore in 1960 and 1961, early assessments saw that farmers had actually taken to contour bunds (a difference from many other projects). But it soon

became clear that follow up and maintenance of such structures was neglected by farmers, and the project was failing to achieve its goals (Pretty and Shah 1997). In the early days of mass conservation interventions in the United States, seldom few voices dissented. However one that did raised a major critique: that the construction of structures without maintenance did more harm than good, in the end *causing* the erosion it was meant to abate (Sauer 1934 in Trimble 1985). Sauer pointed out that the construction of terrace structures was actually inducing displacements of soil— the very thing that soil conservation was attempting to halt. As terraces were not maintained, they produced more erosion than they halted.

Since then, similar evidence of long-term negative consequences of state implemented soil conservation projects have been found. Interventions have brought deleterious drainage issues in Zimbabwe (Wilson 1989), gully formation caused by contour banks in Lesotho (Showers and Malahleha 1990), and erosion in Oaxaca, Mexico that has only become serious following the imposition of terraces and bunds (Blackler 1994). Arguably, many agricultural interventions produced in demonstration plots under controlled circumstances are highly effective in such research contexts. Outside of such contexts, however, the interventions are unsuitable for many farmers (Carter 1995). The highly technical and supposedly mobile interventions decry a fundamentally place-based utility. In essence, there has been an investment of a great deal of money in systems of management suitable only for research stations. Such research, rigorous though it may have been, often (quite literally) fell apart when implemented.

A sort of state "tunnel vision" exists such that varied practices to mitigate erosion that occur outside of a frame of uniform and standardized programs are 'unseen' or 'unseeable'. For the State, the varying uses and strategies of erosion mitigation by indigenous groups, for example, are invisible (Scott 1998). As Pretty and Shah (1997) highlight, soil conservation

interventions stem from ontological and epistemological modernity. Scientifically tested techniques, and aesthetic ideals from theorist/designers such as Le Corbusier, saw the lived environment as a tangle, and sought to correct disorder with a birds-eye view of order and logic (Scott 1998). The managerial administration of soils and agriculture seeks similar types of uniformity and control. As the problem of erosion has consistently been defined in terms of the unregulated farming practices throughout the world, the regulation, regularization, and control of farmers and soils becomes nearly an ontological imperative. Large institutional interventions first encouraged, and then coerced farmers to adopt such structures.

## *Soil Conservation in Haiti*

It is through these large institutional interventions that the growing assemblage of techniques, strategies, assumptions, and experts come to Haiti. Certainly, more 'indigenous' soil conservation structures exist in Haiti. So called *ramp pay* (leaf barriers) were constructed by some farmers to slow the descent of rainwater.[33] However, according to aid research, these need to be reconstructed each year and is not particularly effective (White 1992). Institutional and project based approaches to soil conservation largely ignored such landowner technical knowledge and practices, and were highly criticized for not achieving sustained land protection or economic gain (White and Jickling 1995). As elsewhere in the world, soil conservation as a technical and expert knowledge arrived in force through state interventions, and most fervently through 'development'. Prior to the "development encounter" (Escobar 1995), the agricultural

[33] Some farmers also would move small rocks into makeshift barriers.

extension service in Haiti appears to be relatively limited in geographic scope (United Nations 1949).[34] From 1946 to 1959, a UNESCO pilot project was implemented in the Marbial Valley in the south of Haiti. This was the first development intervention in Haiti, and part of the first wave of pilot projects in education undertaken by UNESCO (Watras 2010). While the focus of the project was education, education was broadly construed following the research and recommendations of anthropologist Alfred Métraux (1951). Métraux attributed poverty in the valley to three main causes: soil erosion caused by rapid deforestation, small landholdings that were prohibitive to the use of technologies such as the plow, and the over-population of the region that placed excessive pressure on the land (Mètraux 1951:2). As a result, erosion control and reforestation were part of practical agricultural instruction efforts (Efron 1955, Murray 1977). From the earliest moments of the encounter between Haitians and international aid, soil conservation has been a key aspect of development, and its problematization has been intricately linked to neo-Malthusian framings of population and environmental degradation.

The first to write of soil conservation in Haiti in a significant way was Charles John Erasmus in 1952. A field ethnologist from the Smithsonian Institute of Social Anthropology, he was assigned to collaborate with the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. He took a short trip to Haiti in 1952 to work on the Artibonite pilot project, another research venture aimed at defining the problems that future development interventions would fix. Erasmus (1952) focused in part on the acceptance or the rejection of interventions into agriculture. For example, he observed that the benefits of new plant species are quickly spread among farmers because farmers observe an immediate increase in market price or yield. On the contrary, he noticed that refining farmers' cultivation practices (by suggesting new strategies such as planting in rows, or standard spacing

[34] However, the 1949 UN document should be read as more of a colonial document that problematizes the Haitian people and government. While it lists agricultural extension activities as limited in scope, we should keep in mind that the document's purpose is to, quite literarily, create problems to be solved.

between plants) were more slowly diffused. He posited that the economic benefit to such practices was less apparent, and that the spread of such strategies was related to economic benefits of the interventions. In his categorization of various interventions, he created a separate category for practices met with little or no acceptance. It was in this category that he put soil conservation structures.[35]

Since the 1950s, the early years of soil conservation in Haiti, Haitian farmers have been reticent to adopt or maintain such interventions. After the work of Erasmus, there is a lull in soil conservation research in Haiti from 1952 to around 1979 when recently minted anthropologist Gerald Murray conducted two USAID sponsored studies. Murray (1979) writes that by 1979 USAID had already devoted a significant amount of funding to organizations such as CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to conduct soil conservation throughout the country.[36] By this point, there was a broad network of institutions participating in soil conservation: Haitian government agencies, international funding/relief agencies, missionary groups, and US based contract institutions. Murray's evaluations were resoundingly negative. He echoed Erasmus' findings that soil conservation structures (such as contour canals)[37] had not been adopted or maintained by farmers, and added that the majority of the soil conservation interventions were remarkably unsuccessful. Murray's definition of success for soil conservation was "the adoption by farmers, as part of their own agrarian practices, of measures designed to combat erosion" (1979:2). In reviewing the literature, White (1992) noted that the only cases in which structures had been adopted and maintained was

[35] Similarly not adopted were crop rotation, animal shelter construction, and the prevention of burning after the harvest.

[36] During the 1970s and 1980s, more than 132 projects targeted agriculture and the environment, the majority of which focused on transferring conservation technology (AID 1990).

[37] Other structures introduced in Haiti were rock walls, contour hedgerows, and terraces. Rock walls were built in the middle of ravines, to slow the descent of water. Terraces were intended to reduce the slope of land into flat, stepped spaces. Both required significant investments of labor and time. Contour hedgerows were rows of vegetation planted along contours of the hill (White and Jickling 1995).

in the area above Port-au-Prince, where farmers were using such structures to protect the erosion of valuable fertilizer provided by international donors (See Murray 1979). The only early case of adoption and maintenance was not about the protection of soil, but the conservation of donated fertilizer.

Further research pointed out the problematic nature of soil conservation programs. Jumping forward another fifteen years, a larger World Bank study examined soil conservation in Central America and the Caribbean and noted that soil conservation programs had fallen short of expectations, and that farmer adoption had not occurred after projects left (Lutz et al. 1994). USAID continued to fund studies that noted the disappointing results of these sorts of projects since the 1950s. One study in particular noted that "to a large degree, these technologies have not been adopted or maintained by peasants and have not spread beyond the immediate project boundaries" (White 1992:8). Conservation structures have been shown time and again to fall short of goals: "mechanical measures, including bench terraces, contour rock walls, and canals have not been adopted without external incentive and when adopted have generally not been maintained. These techniques require substantial labor investments, result in little economic benefit, and are culturally alien to peasants" (White and Jickling 1995). In Murray's (1994) article on soil conservation in the Dominican Republic, the idea of adoption and reproduction of soil conservation is mentioned as an "idealized scenario." Similar to the global application of soil conservation, the imposition of conservation structures in Haiti had been done according to project prescriptions as opposed to peasant preferences. Soil conservation in Haiti replicated the same approaches and propagated the same errors as interventions in the US, Africa, and South Asia.

Despite repeated failings, soil conservation and contour canals in particular were implemented again and again. Reforestation initiatives, agroforestry interventions, and other agro-ecological interventions were introduced in the 1980s, but bunds and canals continue to spread throughout the hillsides. Yet their propagation was due not to farmers' adoption of the intervention, but rather to the substantial incentives given to those who participate. Murray noted in 1979 that the majority of these projects used some sort of reimbursement for project participation. While he recommended against it, a large portion of conservation was done through 'food for work' interventions. Though far more interested in convincing USAID to move towards agroforestry interventions, Murray suggested that some sort of remuneration for soil conservation should be provided for farmers in order to encourage the introduction of interventions that would otherwise be an economically 'risky' investment for farmers.[38]

Linking employment opportunities to soil conservation had been entangled in the efforts of soil conservation from early on: the Civilian Conservation Corps in the United States and US Soil Erosion Service (and the resulting Soil Conservation Service) used Roosevelt's New Deal employment projects through the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to construct soil conservation structures. Roosevelt's New Deal policies included a preference for work relief rather than direct unemployment relief (Helms 2010). Therefore, the Roosevelt administration created short term jobs of all descriptions (artistic, infrastructural) rather than a welfare type system. Through similar food for work or cash for work interventions, farmers are first encouraged, then coerced into implementing solutions that were 'known' to work (Pretty and Shah 1997).

[38] Murray was far more interested in projects of agroforestry, which he would go on to direct at USAID. He noted that remuneration need not be disbursed in terms of simple wages, and that it certainly would not lead directly to 'project success'.

But by 1993 the funding terms of soil conservation in Haiti had shifted. Previous funding sources had been designed to affect change in the environment, relying on problem definitions of population growth and erosion, developing solutions that directly targeted those problematics. For example, "*Proje Sove Te*" [sic] (Project Save the Land), was funded by USAID in 1987, to "arrest the process of environmental degradation in Haiti's watershed areas" (Associates in Rural Development 1990:5). Though explicitly targeting environmental objectives, *Proje Sove Te* [sic] used cash incentives to coerce farmer participation. But by 1993, major project funding for soil conservation begins to come not from environmental funds, but directly from job creation funds. The 1993 Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) JOBS creation project was an agreement whereby USAID and PADF attempted to provide "480,000 person/months of immediate and useful short term employment" (Brown et al. 1995: 2). The project would rehabilitate infrastructure using "sound technical standards" and would "restore hope" among the neediest unemployed. Soil conservation was considered as one of these infrastructural interventions. A USAID project evaluation for HACHO (The Haitian-American Community Help Organization) remarked: "The soil conservation program was, in practice, more a hunger relief program than an agricultural development program aimed at reversing the trend toward depletion of the area's major resource base— its soil and water" (Brinkerhoff et al. 1983:C-3). These funds were in fact coming from PL-480 funds, "Food for Peace," which was a budget line of food aid. Similar interventions were being conducted through different funding mechanisms.

Therefore, because of the funding type, soil conservation interventions became more and more focused on built structures as a way to facilitate wage labor. Within the PADF/USAID JOBS project, project requirements make certain interventions possible and others impossible. For example, full vegetative cover of hillsides is not feasible for this type of implementation—

the labor requirements are too few and not as measurable. However, the labor intensive construction of contour canals becomes an ideal intervention. Of the soil conservation structures, contour canals were by far the most extensive intervention in that project: a reported 625 km of canals were built in the intervention area in the south of Haiti (Brown et al. 1995). Recent interventions follow this model, tying soil conservation structures directly to 'cash-for-work' type remuneration (USAID 2010).

While the intentions of soil conservation have always been about controlling farmers' practices, the specific types of control targeted by aid alters according to the 'needs' of funding. The environmental 'effectiveness' of canals and other conservation structures has been clearly challenged by environmental and social 'experts'. While the environmental impact of canals was suspect, their visibility and labor intensity was not. Canals became useful not because they could effectively prevent of erosion, but because they were a visible representation of large expenditures of labor. Indeed, the long-term environmental results of soil conservation are of far less interest to reports than measurable, project-based improvements (Howard 1997). Measurements from the reports record the distance of canals built, number of walls, or ravines plugged. These assessments are forms of accountability, translating the ordered soil into the order of project reports. The Corbusian uniformity of contour canals is not the only thing ordered by the imposition of soil conservation. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, aid interventions are also an exercise of formalizing, commodifying, and financializing the reciprocal relationships between farmers (Howard 1997). In this sense, not only does the environment come under the regulatory gaze of soil conservation, so too does labor.

As the global movement of soil conservation is localized in Haiti, its discourses and practices of control and regulation are imposed on Haitian farmers. Its problematization of the

environment depends on the early writings on environmental degradation sponsored by aid institutions. That is, for contour canals to become a possible intervention in to Haiti, the problem definition must focus on environmentally destructive of farming practices. Accumulation and dispossession, and the negotiations of farmers in a larger political-economic frame dissipate as population and farming practices are defined as the most salient problems. Haitian fertility and farmers become the roots of destruction, mapping degradation onto rural Haitians themselves.

## *Conclusion: The New Networks of Canals*

Consistent reliance on population growth to explain degradation maps environmental degradation onto Haitians, and specifically, onto the bodies of Haitian women. The prospect of unchecked fertility in the countryside aligns with views that farmers do not possess the knowledge necessary to practice good farming. The focus on the 'excessively fertile masses' masks what should otherwise be an inquisition of the relations of production and consumption. Within such a problem definition, as concern grows to the level of the state, large scale measures reform and regularize deviant farming strategies of the growing population.

Soil conservation then, relies on this problematization by neocolonial powers and development experts to portray not only the soil, but those who work it. Some dissenting portrayals in aid reports paint farmers as resourceful: "It is all too easy and, in some circles, all too common to allow the contemporary crisis in the peasant sector to obscure the fundamental character of the rural Haitians as successful and highly innovative agriculturalists" (Lowenthal

1990:6).[39] But soil conservation structures are a solution to the problem of the deficient farmer, and are dependent on definitions of farmers as environmentally incompetent. The majority of this chapter has cited the knowledge production of USAID with good reason: at least through the 1980s, USAID was the most important foreign aid donor to global soil conservation programs both financially and intellectually (Blaikie 1985). By funding not only the problem definition but the attempted solutions as well, USAID (and other aid/colonial administrations) attempts to resolve a technical problem of their own definition. The dynamic of such expert advice and research depends on the "rendering technical" (Li 2007) of development problems. Such rendering technical, as a component of expert knowledge, leads to a decontextualization that in part, denies history (Lewis 2009). Literature on soil erosion that focuses on the farmers is buttressed by a definition of degradation that relies not on a disperse set of relationships of production, but the growth of a population of poorly prepared farmers.

The solutions to these problems are the structures of soil conservation. But the structures survive and are propagated as they are enrolled into multiple narratives. Labor compensation was originally a necessary component of a decidedly environmental/agricultural intervention. But as funding priorities shifted (especially in times of political unrest and economic hardship experienced in the early 1990s), activities requiring heavy expenditures of labor are enrolled into new networks where environmental conservation measures become not primary, but secondary to the labor required by contour bunds and canals. In re-framing the network away from the rogue movements of soil and towards visual labor expenditures, the structures are maintained while the network changes. The distance of canals built is a numeric that verifies not the soil

[39] Lowenthal's other views are not as laudatory: in addition to blaming population growth for degradation, he sees Haitian farmers as detrimentally selfish. I argue against such views in Chapter Five.

conserved, but the labor used. The building of canals, in all of its structural precarity, becomes secondary to cash-for-work job creation.

Short term job creation through soil conservation has created new ways of understanding conservation. In South Asia, it was found that in some cases, the short-term incentives paid to farmers "distorted local perceptions of conservation" (Pretty and Shah 1997:44). As soil conservation efforts become 'de-environmentalized' in Haiti, agronomists and farmers also look to conservation in a different light, arranging soil to different ends. Soil conservation begins to look less and less like an ideal from the sketches of Hugh H. Bennett, and far more like a crossroads; appearing as an intersection of a series of interconnected networks, each drawing on the canals for different ends. As it does so, soil conservation fits into a new network, that of the project.

# CHAPTER THREE: The Projectification of the Haitian Countryside

The heat was so strong during August that by the time I arrived at Lebèl's house in Damòn, only a five minute walk from the river, my feet were dry. Lebèl, the president of the farmers group ATAD (*Asosyasyon Plantè Agrikòl Damòn* - Association of Agricultural Farmers, Damòn), was waiting for me that day, early in my fieldwork. I was not yet living in the town of Powapè, so had taken a motor-taxi along the coast from Lejè. As part of the Initiative for Haiti's Coast (IHC), the International Relief Organization (IRO) had contracted ATAD to implement a soil conservation project. It involved constructing a plot of contour mounds, small ravine walls, and a hillside garden. As a model of community participation, IRO does most of its agricultural and environmental work by contracting small farmers associations such as ATAD. Lebèl greeted me and we walked up towards their work site. He had invited me to see the work that ATAD was doing each week. Though the funding for the soil conservation project had run out a few weeks before, the group was still working each Tuesday, weeding the hillside and maintaining the plots. As we approached the nursery at the base of the hills that were being cultivated, we passed a sign emblazoned with "ATAD," and the logos of both IRO and IHC.

Though I had been to Damòn a number of times by this point, this was the first time I would meet many of those who would become my closest interlocutors. I documented in my field notes my first experience with the larger group:

> I was invited to participate in their tree planting this morning. I arrived at just about exactly 10am. Lebèl met me at his house, and we walked up towards where the *pepinye* (nursery) was. There we met the manager of the nursery, whom I had talked with previously, named Adàm. We said a brief hello, and then went to join

> the group of approximately 20-30 people who were using hoes and machetes to weed the hillside. I walked up with Lebèl and said hello to everyone. Lebèl asked if I wanted to see [the area] above, where they had also done work, and I said sure…When we walked up, a woman said that it was good to see me because "we need money." I said, I don't have any money to give you. She said, we don't need your money, "*nou bezwen pwoje*" (we need projects)." (author field notes, 8/9/2012)

Requests for projects would soon become a norm in my daily life. As a *blan* walking through the trails that wound throughout the valleys of Haiti, the assumption was often not that I would hand out money, but rather that I was bringing with me a development project. As in the above scenario, soil conservation took place via projects. As soil conservation enters Haiti, its disbursal is reliant on 'the project' form. So deeply are the two entwined that soil conservation in Haiti cannot be understood without understanding projects.

Early in November, about a week after Hurricane Sandy[40] hit, I was visiting the garden plot of a woman in Damòn. We walked past a boy and an older woman who were digging up peanuts in lower Damòn. The woman yelled out to me "you going to do something for us, *blan*?" In many cases, even hours walk from the closest road or town, Haitians were not only aware of development projects, but understood their dynamics and that I, as *blan* might facilitate them.

While many organizations have attempted to move away from 'project based aid', David Mosse (2005) contends that there is still much to be learned about the policy process and practice by investigating projects. I take his statement a step further: in certain places, despite discourses authored by aid practitioners, the project is still a primary locus of operation for aid interventions. This forces us to think about what happens as development ideals are translated through the project form. As Steven Sampson (1996) has argued, this type of translation argues for an analysis of the "social life of projects," an examination of their properties and functions.

[40] I briefly address the expectation of aid after Hurricane Sandy later in this chapter.

Aid that has been "projectified," as defined by Michael Sedra (2003), refers to how aid is parsed out in terms of projects: divided up among organizations as opposed to coordinated as a whole. While this definition is helpful, I'd like to rethink what projectification might encompass. Specifically, I argue that we should be thinking about not only how aid becomes organized in terms of the project, but also how the project assemblage produces new logics and relationships.

In this chapter I will examine these two phenomena: the projectification of international aid, and the projectification of the Haitian countryside. First, I examine how projects have been conceptualized in other research, and how the phenomenon of projects has gown over time. I then present the ways that Haitians have come to discuss and define projects. By presenting these two inter-related conceptualizations of projects, I highlight how the global assemblage of the project is territorialized. I will then examine the nature of projects through rural Haitians' experience of how projects operate in the countryside. The exclusionary tactics of projects create a critical lens through which many rural residents critique and bemoan the basis of contemporary development aid. Yet in spite of such frustrating characteristics, projects are often the only way in which rural Haitians receive social services. In order to position themselves to be one of the 'selected', grassroots organizations previously unassociated with NGOs or governmental institutions go through the process of legal recognition or formalization to become eligible to receive project funding. In this way, the legal and financial composition of the project assemblage reaches out to rural organizations. As more organizations and individuals hope to receive the benefits of projects, there is a demand for those who have worked within projects, who know how to connect to projects. As projects permeate the hillside, they produce new conceptions of space and time. The material need for and consumption of projects on one hand, and the possession and disbursement of projects by NGOs and governments on the other, echoes

national and international political economies and histories that far precede the introduction of projects.

## *Projects as Assemblages*

For Anna Tsing (2001), a project is "an institutionalized discourse with social and material effects"(2001:4). Tsing's ideas about how such discourses and effects achieve tentative stability through their enactment prompts us to consider the realities espoused by projects. The project form creates new translations, in which contracts are 'terms of reference' and lasting beyond a grant period is 'sustainability' (Sampson 1996). Considering these translations Sampson asks: what happens when discourses become projects?

Albert Hirschman's musings on the project in 1966 are helpful descriptors, many of them true today: "the term connotes purposefulness, some minimum size, a specific location, the introduction of something new, and the expectation that a sequence of further development moves will be set in motion" (1966:1). Hirschman's rather utilitarian definition brings with it the implications that time, space, technical concepts, and the amorphous cloud of development are deeply implicated in projects. His focus on a localized space and size, however, present an analytical problem when confronted with the globalized flows present in projects.

The project itself is a global assemblage, a mobile and hybrid grouping of materials, people, and concepts (Ong and Collier 2005). By thinking about the project as a global assemblage I bring focus to the portable and globally deployed concept of the project. Across the world, the unit of the project enrolls people, documents, money, and materials. Deployed globally by aid institutions, projects suppose a particular administrative and organizational

orientation. By thinking about projects as assemblages (as Erica James (2004) has done with humanitarian assistance), the hybrid nature of each localization of a project is brought into focus. While the project is unique in each instance, it is marked by certain common properties: broader claims are made as this hybrid grouping of actors is brought together and understood as cohesive, rational, and whole.

Such assemblages of employees, employers, farmers, agronomists, budgets, plans, soils, and trees, are tenuous. Without constant work, the audits, mid-term evaluations, closing reports, and consultants (for example) become not logical extensions of financialization and a corresponding audit culture, but can be absurd impositions of an arbitrary organizational system (see Latour 1996). The project is a type of ontological assertion then: it is a grouping that requires a particular world view to decipher it. While I investigate the project here in terms of the actors enrolled both abroad and in Haiti, the importance of this analysis is revealed when we consider the way that projects have become the unacknowledged, yet utterly pervasive form through which we conceptualize aid. Development workers plan and manage projects, divide their time in terms of projects, and often charge their time to specific projects.

By working through both governmental and non-governmental organizations, projects nimbly defy scholarship that would place institutions as the unit of analysis. Government entities form work groups through projects, and their incursions into the hillsides are often project bound— road building or repair, water access, or job creation are talked about in terms of the project to which they pertain. Projects define and divide up problems into discrete issues to be solved (see Callon 1986). Non-governmental entities that work through project based financing propel a cadre of actors towards the goals inscribed in project documents. While ethnographic understandings of institutions can tell us much about the negotiations of individuals within and

around those institutions, an analysis based on projects shifts our focus to groupings that extend beyond institutions. By following one project, we link global financial movements to concepts of development, multiple institutions, and interactions between actors in Haiti. But by focusing on one project alone, we might miss the way that histories of multiple projects have produced the contemporary Haitian countryside. To that end, I do not advocate simply for the analysis of *one* project, but rather an analysis of projects (plural) overtime throughout the countryside.

## *Projects in Development*

The growth of the project has not been alongside a broad economic credo, but seems to have its own principles and concepts, adeptly incorporated into a mix of politics, procedures, and implementations. The use of state sponsored labor groups (such as in the Work Projects Administration during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs), were embraced under Keynesian theories of economic growth. These principles held that economic problems would be best addressed by state led growth through injections of capital (Leyes 1996). However, while we see projects spread under Keynesian economic ideals, their spread is also facilitated under contrary theories of economic growth. Rather than support state led economic interventions, neoliberal economic development theories turned to the development possibilities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) amidst the forced retreat of the state (Karim and Leve 2001, Harvey 2005). The propagation of projects under NGOs (as witnessed by Sedra in 2003 in Iraq and Afghanistan), is certainly formidable. Under both Keynesian and neoliberal economic policies, the project is used as an administrative unit. Projects then, span multiple economic

orientations. The ongoing use of projects as an administrative orientation blurs the strict lines of how we might broadly categorize theories of aid and, as this chapter will demonstrate, offers a new narrative of development, one that breaks away from economic conceptions neoliberal vs state led (see Gupta and Sharma 2006) and moves towards examining the shared structures of aid.

The word "project" (as a noun) is instructive in highlighting how we might think about projects as they act in development. From the etymology listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, 'project' brings together various terms. In part, it comes from the classical Latin *prōiectum* (2nd century A.D) meaning a projecting structure. In post-classical Latin, there are roots from the past participle of *prōicere,* to throw out or put forth. But this doesn't account fully for the sense in which we use it today, as a plan, draft, or scheme (Oxford English Dictionary). Rather, the middle French *pourget "*plan" (~1470) might be more instructive. These early definitions might help us think through the poetics of the project. The project draws on elements of planning, but also references an extension outward, an orientation toward the future. We might think also of the project as encompassing elements of utterance and throwing, highlighting not only a gaze toward the future, but the way that a project declares and makes mobile.

It is not until the middle of the 20th century that 'projects' expand in use. Its use as a noun has grown from its origin in the late 1500s, when it referred to "A planned or proposed undertaking" (Oxford English Dictionary). It is not until 1952 that the term "project approach" enters wide usage. With the mass digitization of English texts, it has become possible in recent years to chart the growth and usage of a word throughout a corpus of work. Data from Google's NGram viewer creates graphic representation of word use in the entire collection of books scanned by Google over a selected period of years. Since the twentieth century, there has been a

precipitous rise in the use of 'project' as a noun[41]. Such a rise in usage was based not in a simple numeric increase (which may have been accounted for by the constant increase in number of texts produced), but as a percent of all written texts. After increased use at the beginning of the 20th century, the rise of project as a noun began a steep growth just prior to 1920. The use of 'development project' has seen a similar boom, starting in the 1920s and 1930s and beginning to increase exponentially between 1940 and 1950. Since just before 2000, the broad usage has started to decline (at least in written form), which may be accounted for the supposed decline of 'projects' in official development texts (Mosse 2005). While this analysis of increased usage tells us little about the context of that use, it does help to identify the past fifty or so years as the time in which 'projects' have increasingly come into the scope of the English language. Therefore we might think of this as 'the project era'. Its growth raises the possibility of use not only in terms of development aid, but its application in employment and social services that are bounded by 'the project'.

[41] This was differentiated from 'Project' as a verb.

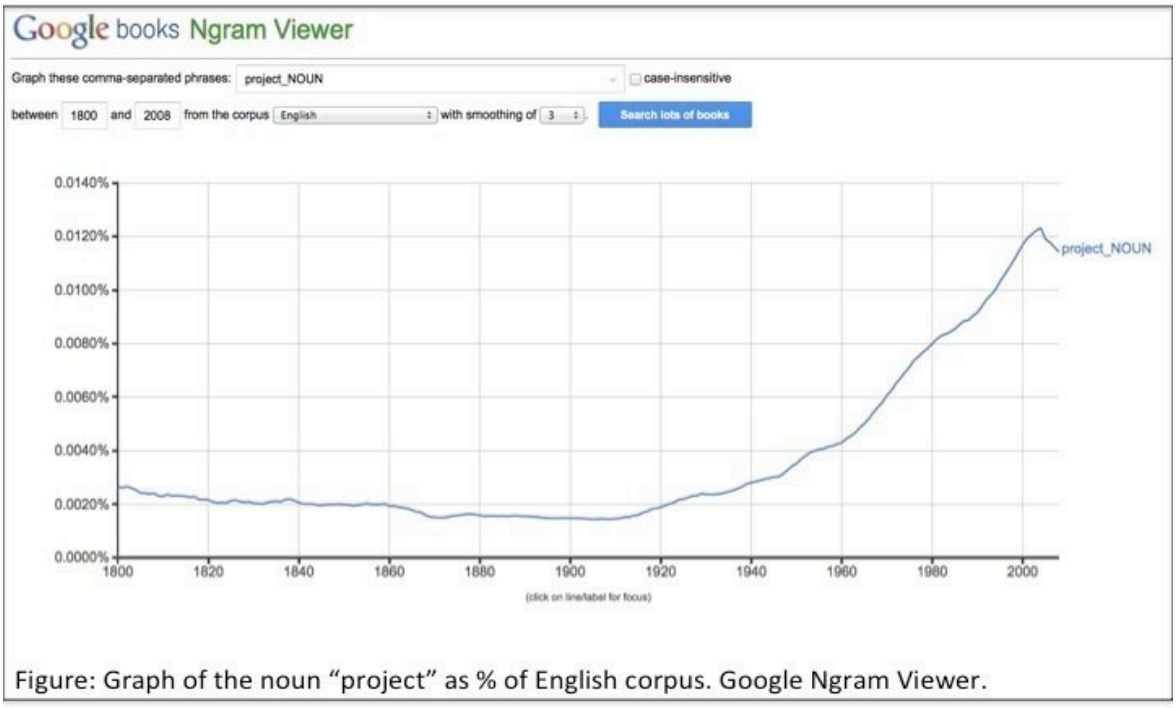


Figure: Graph of the noun "project" as % of English corpus. Google Ngram Viewer.

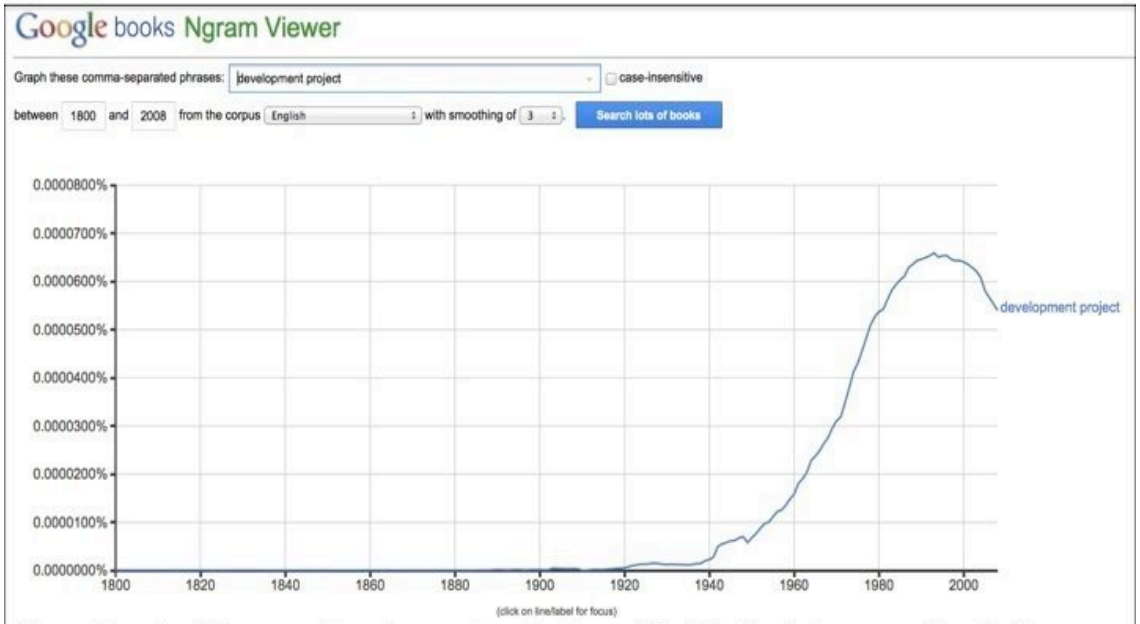


Figure: Graph of the noun "development project" as a % of the English corpus. Google Ngram

However, aid workers and the broader development apparatus are discursively moving away from 'projects' in an attempt to think about longer term issues, goals, and questions of sustainability (Mosse 2005). The UK Secretary of State for International Development stated that effective aid will move away from project based funding to developing poverty-reduction strategies drawn up by developing countries themselves (Mosse 2005). This is evident in Haiti, as the Initiative for Haiti's Coast (IHC) promoted a 20 year vision based on sustainability and growth, arguing that a long term perspective is needed in terms of addressing some of Haiti's more profound environmental and economic issues, and that partnership through government entities is the way to achieve this long term vision. One of the senior administrators for IHC described it simply as a tool to "accompany the government."[42] Indeed, conversations I had with donors and administrators focused not on the ideas of individual 'projects', but rather on longer-term 'initiatives'. This movement away from the project, at least discursively, is instructive. Arguments of sustainability frame development in terms of not only economic growth, but environmental preservation as well, bringing focus to the 'long-term' (see Lele 1991, Sachs 1993).

Despite the use of the term 'initiative' and a 20 year vision, the short-term development project is still very much alive for the IHC. Even with such long-term terminology, the initiative was broken down by both its implementing organizations and target populations into smaller short term projects. The cause for such 'short sightedness' in practice was financial timelines and obligations. With only one year of funding, there were reporting requirements and reviews that stood in the way of lofty goals. Barely into the first six months of implementation, a scathing

[42] Such discourses align with the Paris Declaration, an OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) document focusing in part on the 'ownership' of development goals by 'developing' countries (OECD 2014).

evaluation from the donor put the second year of funding in question. Staff was laid off, and institutions were removed from the initiative: “The idea from the beginning was that we would start and they would work to get other donors” (Sara, donor representative 10/27/12). But there were no other donors; the actors that were required to support the network weren’t successfully enrolled. Projects, and in this case initiatives, do not fail, they are failed by wider networks of support and validation (Mosse 2004). In spite of romantic ideals encompassing a long term sustainability, managers were forced to work within a financially imposed timeline that restricted design, implementation and reporting to one calendar year. Both HOEA and IRO, working in the agro-ecological sector, were in what seemed like a sprint to complete their work by the designated time, and file the necessary reports with UNONE. In the end, an extension was given— no further funding, but an administrative period to complete the projects under contract. Despite efforts to consciously break with ‘short term’ development, the 20 year initiative had been converted into a short term series of projects spanning just over one year.

Bruno Latour’s focus on the actors enrolled in projects brings a material analysis to the movement of texts involved in projects: “In the beginning, there is no distinction between projects and objects. The two circulate from office to office in the form of paper, plans, departmental memos, speeches, scale models, and occasional synopses” (1996: 24). A project, at least in its origin, is best followed by the movement of texts. Such a conceptual frame moves beyond theories of scale that would place the broader project design as ‘above’ the ‘on the ground realities’. But understanding each local context of the project helps to move beyond ‘global’ vs ‘local’ arguments. Thinking about moments of global and local can become a forced perspective of vertical scale, one that is true for the project administrators but is unhelpful as an epistemological frame (Marston et al. 2005). If we think of a project less in its vertical

orientation, and more in terms of the movement of actors such as documents, funding, and people, we can more clearly examine moments of interaction and where and with whom they occur.

As discrete things, these papers (reports, evaluations, proposals) oblige an examination of what documentation and bureaucracy entails. For example, such documents can constitute ways by which individuals try to control resources and relationships (Bell 2009). For Weber (1968), the establishment of bureaucracies was an establishment of regimes of control. Documents are then instruments for materializing references, an attempt to establish the order of actions and objects (Weber 1978). These documents (paper or electronic), are the artifacts of knowledge, drawing on utopian and modernist visions of the world through transparency and information exchange (Riles 2006). To look *at* these documents rather than *through* them (Hull 2012b), treats documents as actors that can translate and distort the elements that they are supposed to carry.

The importance of documents in the hillsides of Haiti cannot be understated. As I demonstrate later in this chapter, they are the way that farmers associations become 'known' and visible (Scott 1998), and one of the primary products of NGOs and aid organizations. Emerging from within aid offices, paper, PDFs and computer files are where projects are produced and legitimized. So important are these bureaucratic productions that one foreign resident of Lejè told me, tongue in cheek, that in fact reports were all that UNONE produced in the IHC office. So many reports were produced that a foundation working with local artistry used old UNONE reports for paper mâché projects.

## *Pwoje in Haiti*

The experiences of Haitian farmers provide powerful counter-narratives to the depictions of projects that occur in reports. In Haiti, while *pwoje* (projects) most often refer to development projects, the word can also refer to domains outside of development.[43] For example, an elementary school teacher who had recently moved back to Damòn after leaving Port-au-Prince was constructing a house of cement (both walls and ceiling, which was noticeably different from the zinc roofs of the rest of the neighborhood). He discussed with me his plans for the second level, saying: "*m gen pwoje pou m fè*..." (I have a project to do), referring to how he would use the roof as a cinema to show movies. In this case, used in a different context, *pwoje* was a strategy to increase income. In reflecting on his years of experience in Haiti working with development and aid, Dr. Robert Maguire noted that in the 1970s in Haiti, he was instructed by a priest working in Haiti that a *pwoje* in Haiti is anything that would make money (personal communication, 2013). As a result, he has summarily cautioned students and practitioners about the use of the word and the implications for talking about development in terms of 'projects'. And indeed, *pwoje* continues to describe the strategies and possibilities of finding income. Wanito, the Haitian acoustic singer-songwriter who rose to popularity in 2011, references *pwoje* in "*Gad'on Rev*" (What a Dream), his song about an unplanned pregnancy: "*M sot konpozè nan filo/ Tout pwoje m tonbè nan dlo*" (I just finished the high school exams/ All my projects have fallen in the water). With no prospects for income, the character in the song returns to the countryside, taking up farming, planting corn, and attempting to survive outside of urban Port-au-Prince. The concept of the project in Haiti, even when not directly referencing development aid, is often tied to an income-generating potential.

[43] Similar to the word 'project' in English.

For many countryside residents, *pwoje* had become synonymous with wage labor and jobs. On one of my walks with Telo (a technician working under contract with HOEA), we came across a group of men cutting planks of wood out of a tree. Our day had been spent walking around the area of Rotò, talking to residents, and asking them questions about projects and soil conservation. At the end of the interview, I asked the man who seemed to be in charge of a small carpentry operation if he had any questions for me. He began to describe the current hillside neighborhood in terms the absence of latrines, and started talking about his interest in aid and projects. "We would need *èd* (aid) for finding a source of water…Even if they give *èd*, [we] would like a *pwoje*" This, he said, is "because a *pwoje* gives jobs, and people are interested in working in *pwoje*" (author interview notes, 9/8/12). A later exchange confirmed this perception of a link between projects and labor: an older woman I met in Gran Damòn said that *pwoje* are something that give people work, and that they (the NGO employees) come and take the number of your identification card. In fact, many said that projects were '*èd'* (aid) itself, or development itself. Others still said that projects are "the life of the country" (*lavi peyi a).*

While they may have been the life of the country, according to the interviews I conducted, they were often understood as external to the area. From the work with NGOs and farmers associations, it was clear that projects were something that was to be obtained from external sources. Projects were both received passively, and requested actively by rural associations. One older resident of Gran Despas who had worked in soil conservation projects explained the following when I asked him what a project was: "you make a plan, you meet together, you look at problems in the zone to see how we resolve them, we make a budget, we write a letter, we send it to those who are above to see if people can send something to help the area" (author interview notes 12/4/12). For him and for many others, projects were the form by

which concerns could be voiced to either government or non-governmental agencies in the hope of aid.

Project based development then, has entangled itself into the lives of many rural residents in Haiti. Whether it is based on supplying work, or more profoundly being *lavi* (the life) of the countryside, 'projects' have become a dominant frame of development. The perception of a largely 'external' source entering the countryside through NGOs or government agencies created a pathway of funding that eventually, after many twists and turns, reaches the countryside. However, the pathways of projects propagated inequalities found in the countryside. The actual beneficiaries of the project were not necessarily those who were claimed to be the beneficiaries by planning documents.

## *Touche Lajan, Manje Lajan (*Touching Money, Eating Money)

Projects bring resources to the countryside, but those resources are not evenly distributed, nor do they arrive to the countryside in a neat and consistent form. Borrowing analysis from my interlocutors, two phrases encompass the selective ways in which projects were experienced in the countryside: *touche lajan* and *manje lajan* (touching money and eating money). Projects often brought the possibility of wage labor, the possibility of increasing a meager income. This opportunity to obtain much needed cash was often referred to as '*touche lajan'* (to touch money). Touching money meant having the opportunity to connect with money, to literally get a hold of money, to make money. But this was just a possibility.

One late afternoon, in a well shaded corridor of Tisit, I entered a particularly humble house to talk with an older woman. As part of my interviews, I was going through the neighborhood asking about projects and soil conservation. In the small and rather dark house, she spoke at length and was quite blunt about how she saw projects working in the area. She said that here, projects "*pa ka devlope"* (can't develop). "*Mèt pwoje pran lajan"* (the owners of the project take the money). She was bitter about her time with a local woman's group in which her participation did not lead to any project benefits. The exact story was unique, but her sentiments were not. Many recognized that the potential for project benefits was nothing in comparison to what was received by NGO workers or the '*gran manje*' (the big eaters) who would take their cut off of the top.

Under a tree in Rotò, during a market day, a group of men chatted with me about projects. One exclaimed "*yo manje l anle nan gran biwo*" (they eat it above in the big offices). While peasants had the possibility of 'touching money', bureaucrats and project administrators were not just making money, but rather 'eating' (*manje*) project money. While touching and making money implies movement and a positive sense of acquisition, eating money did not. Rather, eating money brought with it a negative connotation of consumption, one that halts the supposed routes of project aid and propagated inequalities that prevented resources from reaching rural residents.

Lebel, the president of ATAD was similarly frustrated with the way that resources were disbursed after Hurricane Sandy. He said that 'cards' were given to people in town affected by the storm in order to disburse aid. But he never saw any entrance into the hillsides, noting that the *gran moun* (big people) get all the money while the *ti moun* (little people [poor]) don't get

any. At the same time, he told me that a large quantity of aid was to arrive after the hurricane. But it never seemed to make its way down to Damòn.

'Touching' money through projects was not an opportunity given to all. The opportunity to be a part of project-based labor (or any other type of intervention) was not egalitarian, nor evenly spread throughout the countryside. As one mother in Damòn told me: a project might come to the area, but might not benefit you. She herself had not benefited from any projects. In the hills of Gran Damòn, I visited an elderly woman who had taken to calling me her '*menaj'* (boyfriend). When she first spoke to me about projects I was not sure that I quite understood what she was saying. Simply, she told me: "If you find it [a project], it's good. If you don't find it, it's not good" *(*author interview notes, 11/6/12). Her statement nods to something a bit more insidious about projects: that they have to be found or come across. Obtaining a project, finding it, or calling it into existence, is a fundamental part of the delivery of any sort of project, wage labor or otherwise. This means that only some participate. While employees of IRO said that their selection criteria are always to serve those who are the poorest and most in need, they recognized that their partner organizations (those who subcontract with them) often work differently. One of the farmers in the lower area of Damòn explained to me how he understood the projects:

> For example…if there is a project in this zone, as I'm telling you, it might— the project probably comes from another country. They may have sent it to this zone. Meanwhile, probably…it is a person in the zone that directs the project…Now that person will most likely search for one of 'his or her' people to dig in the project… those who have it can participate, but there is a part of the population, that, if they are not part of 'his/her' people, won't get anything from the project (transcribed interview, 2/1/12)

This farmer pointed out that one must not only have the necessary social connections to take advantage of projects, but that without those connections, a certain sector of the population would not benefit. Because projects enter the countryside linked to a community association of some sort, some informants felt as though the opportunity to partake in projects was strictly limited to those who participated in organizations, or those who had social connections. In Haiti, this is discussed this as a condition dependent on "*moun pa." Moun pa* translates as "one's people," and is often used in Haiti to describe the primacy of social and familial connections in seeking jobs, finding resources, and in this case, the procurement of projects or project based benefits. This might involve having cousins or relatives in important positions, or simply being close friends with someone in a position of relative power.

Madam Ronèl explained the way in which the "*moun pa"* dynamic influenced her history with projects. She was the head of a women's group that was based at the fork of the rivers that ran through Gran Damòn and Tisit. Elected as president year after year, she oversaw both the '*mityèl'* (cooperative lending group) as well as the women's group itself. They had, in the past, done projects that were funded externally. She told me with frustration that the last project they had was in 2006. Now, she said, you write projects but you don't find money. To get projects, you need *moun pa*, and she is not in the business of *moun pa*: "*tout moun se moun"* (Everyone is a person)(author interview notes 9/28/12). *Tout moun se moun* is generally an assertion that the poor deserve access to food, housing, and basic services (Farmer 2010). In this context, Madam Ronèl is calling on a larger assertion about the rights of the poor in Haiti.

But while Madam Ronèl positioned herself as above using kinship and other social connections to find project funding, just moments before, she had described how all of the latrine projects her group received years ago were the result of her son, who used his government job to

funnel projects to her organization. While lamenting the *moun pa* system of projects, Madam Ronèl and the women within her organization had been intimately involved.

The selectivity of project based interventions is not only based on *moun pa,* but is profoundly impacted by the spatial distributions of project-based aid. Spending an afternoon in the hills of Rotò, nearly an hour and a half walk from the coastal road, I spoke with a group of about six men: a few school teachers, one who had worked as a technician on project based aid, and a couple of farmers. They strongly criticized IRO for the way they intervened in soil conservation. Their criticism was based on the importance of soil conservation higher up in the hillsides, and equally on the dearth of aid that they received in areas further in from the coast. Frustrated with IRO, they claimed "y*o pa monte mòn"* (they don't climb mountains)(author notes 9/18/12). Project space, for this group of farmers, ends up replicating zones of marginalization and exclusion. They argued that if agronomists did not implement projects higher up in the hillsides, the interventions (specifically relief and soil conservation) would be ineffective. In the hills of Damòn, above the roadside demonstrations cultivated by IRO and HOEA, farmers lamented that though they would hear of soil conservation projects, those projects did not make it up into the hillsides. The one exception to that was a soil conservation intervention implemented years ago, an hour or so up from Lower Damòn that was built on the land of a government official. But the higher points in the hills were the most important for halting erosion. In the words of the men gathered during market day, to leave the upper regions of the hillsides out of soil conservation was to "*lave men, siye a tè"* (wash your hands, and dry them with dirt).

In our conversation, the men sitting around on market day expressed extreme skepticism about the degree to which projects were not only selecting beneficiaries and areas of

intervention, but whom the projects actually benefit. One of the more elderly men commented on how projects trickle down "to the ground." He said that the project manager "gives it to one little friend and then writes a big report about it" (author interview notes, 9/18/12). He understood the production of reports as not only a part of projects, but that the work done to produce these reports came at the expense of the supposed beneficiaries. The money that could be going to rural residents instead was paying the salaries of those who worked in the offices. In the same group of men, another continued by saying that projects use peasants *"pou fe plan soti*" (to make their plans a reality). But, he said, "*se pa peyizan ki wè benefis*" (It is not the peasants that see the benefits). In the expanding network of the project, a population is required to become the 'beneficiary'. They must willingly be convinced to become a part of the project, and if they are not, their disengagement (as with the case of IHC) can lead to the 'failure' of the project (see Callon 1986, Mosse 2004).

The above insights raise the possibility that in the political economy of the project, it is not the farmer that is dependent on projects, but as these residents suggested, that NGOs are dependent on projects. Without the willing cooperation of peasant groups, projects cannot be completed, nor deemed 'successful'. Without designations of success, reports cannot be written, and without reports, organizations cannot get more funding, which puts into question their financial feasibility. Despite providing benefits to some, projects become a game of chance, a possibility of cash in the cash scarce Haitian countryside. Through the proliferation of projects, there is an extension of existing inequalities through unequal distribution of projects, and the consumption of project benefits not in the countryside, but by the NGOs, and their employees, the aid intermediaries (Schuller 2009). The hope of touching some of that money stands in sharp contrast to a selectivity based on social and familial connections, geographic proximity to

subcontracting groups, and project administrators that are not only touching that money, but eating it.

## *Legal Formalization*

Farmers and farmers groups are not simply the inactive 'targets' of projects, but are actively involved in the acquisition and deployment of projects. With so few social services in the countryside, a project was a potential source of resources. In the absence of longer term interventions and the lack of basic services, projects were highly valued. But in order to obtain projects, organizations had to be legally recognized. As I will demonstrate, without legal recognition and paperwork, bank accounts could not be opened, and funds could not be transferred. As a result, grassroots organizations must forge formalized relationships with the government. While numerous organizations went through the process of legal registration years ago (some as early as the late 1980s and early 1990s), the process of registration is still ongoing, slowly penetrating organizations that may have otherwise occupied that tentative and highly romanticized position of the grassroots organization responsible only to its own constituents. Such financially regulated bureaucratic registration and the demands of largely foreign funded projects raise questions about how the 'grassroots' organizations in Haiti may be influenced by the continuing growth and pursuit of aid projects.

Haiti's grassroots organizations (beautifully chronicled by Jennie M .Smith (2001)) have been foundations of community cooperation and solidarity. Many of them are oriented around collective labor. Individuals may choose to associate themselves with a group in order to help

with the demands of maintaining small agricultural plots.[44] Organizations such as the *ekip* and *eskwad*[45] (described in Chapter Six) are examples of such small cooperative labor groups. Other organizations, such as the *konbit*/*gwoupman peyizan*[46] are larger and involve components of musical performance. In the area of Lejè and Powapè, these groups were not interested in aid, and were primarily organized for teamwork in agricultural labor. Yet other civic organizations have developed primarily in response to development aid.

Since the introduction of international development in Haiti in the 1940s, rural organizations have positioned themselves as conduits for aid. Some early aid practitioner/researchers were staunchly opposed to the use of such groups as pathways for aid. These groups, termed village councils (*konsey kominotè*) (Murray 1979), were noted to be almost parasitical in the way that they acted as gatekeepers for aid, syphoning resources for their "*moun pa."* These groups were formed during Francois Duvalier's rural code (1962), intended supposedly to give more autonomy to rural populations, but in reality moving towards increased state surveillance (JM Smith 2001). As aid institutions entered, these groups proliferated. The civic organizations came of age in the context of external development initiatives and often reflect those agendas far more than others (JM Smith 2001). Indeed globally, rural organizations have been seen as ideal implementing intermediaries for development projects (Li 2005). Creating and targeting these groups in Haiti was originally seen as an 'efficient' way to disburse funding, and during the Duvalier regime, they were seen as a way to subvert what was viewed as a corrupt and inefficient state apparatus (Delatour et al. 1984).

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[44] Some individuals were more active in such organizations, joining a number of cooperative labor groups throughout the countryside.

[45] What Smith refers to as *atribisyon*. *Atribisyon* is not a commonly heard name in the area of research. These differences may be geographic or historical.

[46] In the region of research, *gwoupman peyizan* and *konbit* were synonymous, which was not the case in the Grand Anse, where Smith's work took place.

Not all rural organizations in the countryside were immediately compelled by project based aid. What Smith calls the *gwoupman komninote*, and I have observed called *oganizasyon* or *asosyasyon*.[47] These neighborhood organizations are groupings that have the 'grassroots' concerns of small labor groups, but with the organizational traits of the expanded community councils. They have the formalized positions such as president and vice-president (as opposed to the *chef* [chief or leader] of the *eskwòd/ekip,* or the various posts involved in a *gwoupman* such as *prezidan*, *general lame, dezyèm gouvene*).[48] These grassroots organizations represent a sort of hybrid (Schuller 2012b, JM Smith 2001), pulling concerns of the community to themes of 'development'. These groups arose as Catholic sponsored development centers began training animators to go into communities, assemble groups, identify problems, and help men and women work together for positive social and political change (JM Smith 2001). They worked on community defined problems with the resources of their members collected in monthly *kotisasyon* (dues). Such activities involved tree planting, road repair, or small lending groups. As community councils of the 1960s and 1970s began to decline, these neighborhood groups arose (JM Smith 2001). Through cooperative labor groups like *ekip* and *eskwad* and neighborhood associations, the 'grassroots' organizations in Haiti have maintained consistent mobilization.

But in the contemporary hillsides some of these grassroots organizations previously removed from aid institutions are gravitating towards the acquisition of projects. As they aspire to supplement almost non-existent social services, they move to find more resources and in so doing are involved in different networks of influence. The international funding requirements and financial tracking that are an intricate part of projects become integrated into rural organizations. Such organizations may have relied previously on the monthly contributions of

[47] Again these differences seem to originate from geographic differences in terminology.
[48] See JM Smith (2001) for an expanded discussion of roles.

member dues, but became more reliant on aid funding. The insertion of aid funding can disrupt social ties and alter priorities of the organizations (Schuller 2012b). The conversion of grassroots cooperative groups into development 'assistants' (who receive development 'assistance'), is not a process that finished with a bygone era, but one that continues to compel organizations towards project eligibility.

For example, as groups take on projects, they become 'sub sub contractors', following bureaucratic rules so that they can become the last institutional destination of aid funding. By quick injections of resources, projects could revitalize nearly non-existent organizations. But questions remain as to what degree the autonomous and 'grass roots' nature of such organizations are maintained. ATAD's history raises questions about the way that farmers associations interact with projects. According to members of ATAD, and the leader of the women's group down the river, ATAD had been completely dormant until the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had disbursed picks, hoes, and seeds after Hurricane Noel in 2007. After the provision of materials and seeds, the organization sprung back to life. Others in the community saw this as a sign that ATAD was simply after projects. While ATAD's shared lending program met regularly, after the completion of their most recent project from IRO, ATAD stopped meeting.[49] To what extent does such funding alter organizations and the countryside when the priorities are declared not by farmers associations and neighborhood groups but by project administrators judging 'success' and 'failure' not by benefits to those groups but by previously determined financial metrics? As Schuller (2012a) observed, the demands of foreign aid funding, in particular USAID, alter Haitian organizations in such a way

[49] They supposedly met every other week, a point of pride as most other organizations only met once a month.

that they are obligated to funding requirements, which can turn attention away from community service provision.

As groups aspire to projects, they must go through registration processes that incorporate them into the world of documents and bureaucracy of aid. The *Organisation Pour le Développment de Midi* (ODM) is a community association located in the hills above Lejè. As in most hillside settlements, houses are dotted along the rolling hills, based usually within earshot of one another. ODM had done some small tree planting and road repair previously and had been working for approximately 4 years as an organization, unattached to the government or to NGOs or aid funding. According to a former president, before that, they existed as a number of separate, smaller groups of neighbors that would work together on community projects. Financially, they survived by the donations of their 100 or so members who gave what they could each month during meetings. This money funded group activities. In the summer of 2012, for the first time, ODM was seeking legal recognition from the state. *Legalizasyon*, legal formalization or recognition, is the process by which community organizations became recognized in the eyes of the state, and therefore become eligible conduits for governmental and non-governmental project based funding.

I participated in one of the organizations' meetings in which Matye, the young president of the group (and son of the former president), discussed the logic of legal registration, reinforcing to the meeting's attendees the need for such a status change. He had proposed the idea of legal formalization in March 2012, about five months prior, and those present voted and agreed that they wanted to begin the process. During that Sunday meeting in July, I arrived with my wife Kate. The schoolhouse where the meeting was held offered a bit of protection from the hot sun, as it had a cement roof. At the front of the room, Matye explained to the group that he

would be visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work to let the government entities know of ODM because "no one else knows that we're here" (author notes, 7/23/12) But he tempered the expectations of the group: the process would not guarantee projects, but it would make the group "known." Once they were visible to the state, he hoped that government authorities would seek them out in order to implement projects.

In the first step of the legalization process, an organization seeks recognition from *lameri,* the mayoral office and administrative center of a municipality. But it is national recognition that usually required for a community organization to receive project based funding, be it from non-governmental or governmental entities. This process of registration is done with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work. The process of formalization is not simply paperwork based. The Office for Social Affairs calls a meeting with three members from the registering organization in order to teach them how to fill out the necessary forms (see Appendix), and to instruct them on what additional materials are necessary for registration. They must include the following: 1. Three copies of a cover letter (see Appendix), 2. Two copies of the organizational constitution (*L'acte Constitutif*), 3. Two copies of the 'verbal process' stating the intentions of the group, 4. Two copies of the statutes, 5. Copies of the legal identification card for each member of the executive committee, 6. Certificate of good health of the executive committee, 7. The cost of printing and certification, 750 Haitian *Goud*[50] (in 2012, approximately US$17), 8. Two folders.

According to Matye, the statutes required would be close to 40 or 50 typed pages. The statutes additionally had their own requirements. Notably, the organization had to decide conditions of admission, disciplinary rules for members, the form and payment of membership fees, and the frequency of financial reporting to group members. Additionally, ODM would have to propose their name and acronym. That name (and its acronym) will be checked in the database

[50] *Goud*, or Gourdes is the Haitian currency.

located in Port-au-Prince. If the proposed acronym is held by another registered institution, then the applying organization's name must be resubmitted and changed. ODM, regrettably, had to change their name because of an already existing acronym.

Countryside associations are compelled to participate in a bureaucracy of aid not only in the process of registering organizations, but in consequent aid interactions. I wrote in my field notes how Lebèl described the laborious process of ATAD's partnership with IRO and the IHC:

> The IHC asked them for all of their documentation, this included the *act konstitif*, *stati*, and the papers from the DGI (*Direction Général des Impôts* - The General Directorate of Taxes) [with whom ATAD was also registered]. He said that they had to go to the UNIBANK office to open an account. They were then given a list of papers that they had to have. They had to go to the regional capital three times. The BNC (*Banque National de Crédit*) then gave them papers that they had to deposit. Going back to UNIBANK, they waited for 2 hours and then their account was approved. Finally registered for the project, they would have to do reports every two weeks about who worked. Then the accountant passed this information to the agronomist in charge of the project. He said that in a project, you have to have everything authorized.
> (Field notes 9/26/12)

These detailed bureaucratic practices draw neighborhood organizations from realms of relative autonomy into the fold of state mandated registration. The act of registering is a disciplinary one, and one that forces organizations into particular forms while altering organizational practices. Filling out such documents begins to alter organizations even before projects have arrived. By entertaining questions of group rules and financial behaviors, organizations begin to fit the form most convenient for the state (Alvaré 2010). Ultimately, it is a recognition that is fostered by the dearth of social services and the hope of aid projects.

A few days after Matye explained to his group the process of legal registration, he told me that it was the idea of project based aid that motivated them to become legally recognized. He

was primarily concerned about bringing external funding into the Midi area. As a group, they were open to every type of project, he said, and wanted to work on whatever comes to the area. Matye said that after the organization was legally recognized, he could even write a project himself. Before this, he lamented, projects had come through the town, and the Midi area was unable to benefit, as it was void of 'known' entities. Legal recognition, he hoped, would allow the organization to be seen, and with that visibility would come the potential for projects. He likened this to the citizenship of a child. The organization is like a baby, he said: "They exist but without the proper paperwork, that person is invisible to the state" (author interview notes 7/23/12).

Lebèl, the president of ATAD, echoed Matye's perspective on registration. Under the shade of the trees in front of Lebèl's house, I asked him why organizations go through the process of registration. He responded to my queries with questions of his own: "How do you know you're Haitian? You have a birth certificate. How do you know you're American? Because you have documentation" (author interview notes, 8/3/12). For both Lebèl and Matye, documentation is the key to visibility from the state. State services are minimal in the countryside, often limited to contact with schools and the occasional communal representative. In more urban regions, the hillsides are referred to as *andeyò* (the outside), and the people who live there as *moun andeyò* (the people outside). The historic marginalization has brought scholars to argue that Haiti's nation and people have been consistently separate and opposed to the state (Trouillot 1990a). The force of peasant movements has indeed been formidable, but the services provided to them has been historically lacking, while resources and labor are continually extracted (JM Smith 2001). With legal recognition, as Lebèl remarks, there is a type of acknowledgement and legitimacy granted not only to the individual, but to the idea the group.

Oddly, perhaps, this is a way in which the 'grassroots' or civil society, rather than desiring to work against or outside of the reach of the state (as in Scott 2009), actually wishes to be incorporated within, to assume a particular form and a particular type of legitimacy. Such legitimacy is motivated by the possibility of projects. As Matye told me while we examined some recently planted seedlings, once legalization occurred, maybe the state would give them *bakòp* (literally, backup), some sort of aid. Consistent state negligence of the countryside, and minimal agricultural support (Shamsie 2012), creates the need for aid. Such dynamics set the stage in which negligence of rural Haiti fosters a desire to be further incorporated into state bureaucratic systems. Such movements are striking for a countryside that previously was closely observed by a state authorized network of *tonton makout,* the private army of the Duvalier regime (Trouillot 1990a).

This new type of self-definition depends not on the enforcement of the state, but rather fundamentally on the entrance of projects. Legal legitimacy is granted through registration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work. However, the moments in which that legitimacy is performed are the moments that projects enter. For example, IRO, in soliciting institutions in the hillsides requires each organization be legally recognized before agreements are signed and rural associations are brought on as project contractors. Such registration is highly financialized: legal registration is required to open a bank account, and a bank account is necessary to receive project funding. While the process is described as legal recognition, we might better understand it as financial recognition.

It is tempting to portray projects as completely morphing countryside organizations into accessories of the development apparatus. Towards the end of 2012, I presented the above critical interpretation of projects and grassroots organizations to Lebèl and three other members

of ATAD. After hearing some of my final thoughts on how projects might be affecting rural organizations, they added further ideas. One of the school teachers who had been in my English class challenged my preliminary conclusions. He said that it is not that organizations *only* work for projects. Organizations need money to finance their activities, he said. He described how this is a poor country, and it may be that the organization goes in a different direction in order to get those funds but the objectives of the organization don't change. Such reflections are important to consider when thinking through the ramifications of aid structures. While organizations will pivot in order to take advantage of aid, he asserted that the overall organization would not change entirely. However, Lebèl thought that my portrayal of projects was not entirely out of place. From his perspective, there were in fact organizations that exist only to exploit projects. Those organizations were often located in town, he said. Indeed, one of the organizations in town was the source of all the cash-for-work jobs sponsored by the government. While developing their own income generating activities, it seemed to some in town that their primary work was as a vehicle for project based aid.

Such varying depictions of organizations portray the way in which projects are networks that become useful to both NGOs and farmer associations. NGOs, in need of 'participation' and vehicles for aid distribution, look to countryside institutions as their own 'sub contractors'. Wielding the purse strings of aid, aid organizations and governments compel the previously 'invisible' organizations into a world of registrations, documents, and bureaucratic visibility. The emphasis on documents, financial procedures and transparency moves the activities of rural organizations away from their typical practices, and towards the practices that constitute work for NGOs and aid institutions. Through the production of documents, resources and relationships can be controlled (Bell 2009). Farmers associations work towards bureaucratic visibility in an

attempt to position themselves for any and all resources, and inso doing become incorporated into the demands and exigencies of the aid apparatus. This process of legal registration requires a certain set of skills, and opens spaces between the demands of the bureaucratic apparatus and the countryside organizations.

## *Project Histories*

Projects make their way in and out of the countryside, and in and out of the lives of those who live there. An examination of a project from the top down (from donor to recipient) can obscure the more lateral ways that projects may be linked together over time. Tracing funding streams allows us to follow a particular implementation over time. But in a projectified countryside, where projects have become ubiquitous, the links between projects across time may become as significant as the relationships between funder, NGO, and recipient. This may occur as aid workers move between posts (Lewis 2008, Fechter and Hindman 2011), or as farmers become technicians or field agents throughout the years. The links may be through organizations that survive in part by proposing and receiving projects throughout time. As time passes, and older soil conservation projects become eroded into small bumps along the hillsides, even the land itself seems to hold the scars of projects come and gone. Within these routes lies the generative potential of projects: one project brings the hope and possibility of more projects. By examining projects through multiple actors, the multiple pathways of projects become visible.

Most often, and most popularly, projects are conceptualized vertically. Perhaps the most publicized argument of development in the past 20 years has been that of the ‘top down’ vs

'bottom up'. For example, the iconic debates between economists Jeffery Sachs (2006), who argued the ability of science and targeted funding to introduce development, and retorts from William Easterly (2006), who criticized aid from 'above' while reifying the 'searchers' looking to support aid from the 'bottom-up'. The very idea of "grassroots" is based in the metaphor of a plant. In the Franco-*Kreyol* development vocabulary, the grassroots is referred to as *òganizasyon de baz* (base organizations), maintaining a vertical orienting principle in which 'top down' or 'bottom' up flows are primary. Yet these "politics of scale" (Smith 1992) decry an adherence to "phallic verticality" (Lefebvre 1991). A focus on that verticality can limit the way that we understand how projects exist in Haiti. Scholars such as Marston et al. (2005) have attempted to abandon hierarchical scale in its entirety, arguing that through hierarchical scales can come a privileging of 'the above'. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) chide the vertical tree-like structures of so called arboreal thinking. Rather, they implore us to think rhizomatically: horizontally and generatively. Heeding this perspective makes visible the links that occur between projects and individuals, and the ways that individuals and organizations make connections. These social connections are dependent on particular relationships and assertions of both space and time. The encounter of these units and structures does not occur 'up there' in the vertical imaginary, but always on the ground and in practice, marking boundaries horizontally and through enclosures, limitations, rules, and authoritative resources (Marston et al. 2005). With this horizontal examination, we better understand how projects move into and out of lives, and the way that projects not only move horizontally, but have a generative capacity. One project 'successfully' completed meant the possibility for more, and one job as a successful field agent could spawn additional jobs. As projects entered, they enrolled individuals and organizations,

both of whom had interests in seeing projects multiply. The following three individuals are examples of how projects are woven in and out of lives in the rural countryside.

The intense involvement with projects means that for some rural residents, histories of livelihoods are histories of movements between projects and organizations. For example, Franswa had worked in projects throughout his life. An older man from Damòn, Franswa was in charge of HOEA's work in Damòn, which entailed maintaining a demonstration plot, planting seedlings, and working with mango grafting. Franswa had worked for CARE as an animator. During that time he proudly said that he had 500 beneficiaries. He organized groups and implemented agricultural nurseries. For various trainings he would organize 60 to 80 people, coordinating food and drink. Later, in 2004, another IRO project entered that provided him with livestock veterinary training. He was currently the section CASEC (*Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale*) member.[51] He noted the financial incentives of being involved in projects "with these projects, when you are a *responsab* (the person in charge), a bit more comes for you. You pass out a certain amount, but then you keep a certain amount for the expenses that you have had by working with the project" (author interview notes, 10/31/12).

Lebèl's life had also been intimately tied to projects. One of the first times that I met Lebèl, a strong-framed and middle-aged man, he told me about his life in terms of the projects he worked on. He had been a technician for an NGO for 10 years outside of the area. In 1994, he received training from World Vision to be a technician for them. Four years later, he came back to Damòn. Since then he started working with ATAD. IRO had entered and given trainings to the organization, which is where they learned about how to form a mutual lending group, one that he now presided over. For a period before his presidency, which began in 2007, ATAD had fallen

[51] A CASEC is an elected official who acts as a section representative to the mayor.

into a lull. When he was elected, there were only 40 *goud* in the organization's account. But that year he was able was able to get funding for hurricane relief through the FAO, which provided a restart of the organization as people were interested in the beans and tools that had been donated to the organization. Following that, ATAD collected money and did a project of *stokaj* (stockpiling) in which different crops would be stored, then resold at a later date when the market price had improved. As president of ATAD he was well versed in how projects were conceptualized and implemented.

Adàm was another leader of ATAD. His life too had involved working with projects as they entered and exited. In fact, when I interviewed him about the various streams of income, he considered his family's income as composed of his wife's teaching salary, his livestock income, and his work with organizations. As a supervisory member of the IRO/ATAD project, Adam was paid a higher salary than the regular workers. His relationships with organizations and projects were not only limited to IRO, but extended to other NGOs hoping to come into the Damòn area. In the fall of 2012, he was working to establish a nursery for another organization attempting to begin work in the area. Such residents' histories of projects, and relationships across projects create an imagery of a horizontal and increasingly complex network of linkages.

There are, however, spaces that exist between the marginalized peasantry and an increasingly financially bureaucratized development apparatus. The demands of legalization and the historical dearth of education opportunities in the rural countryside creates a mismatch between the demands of the system and the literacies of the countryside. In these spaces emerge professions that 'fill the gap' in order to produce the type of documents that adhere to the requirements of the bureaucracy. Power (1997) has framed these positions as 'parasitical new professions' that feed off of the spaces of marginalization and the demands of a highly

financialized aid industry. Teachers and university educated individuals who have worked within NGOs and understand the language necessary often fill the role of these intermediaries.

For example, Matye's group, while undergoing the process of formalization, did not do so alone. He said that while they did draft the ideas for the statutes of their organization, they needed someone external to the group to digitize the information and present it in the specific format required by the office of social affairs. Matye informed me that in their case, the intermediary was a friend, and was helping out the group voluntarily. Normally, however, he would charge for these services. He is a teacher, but supplements his income with 'project preparation', and occasionally will be sent by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work to give trainings on the process. Also, different neighborhood associations would request training from him and pay for his help. These new jobs are generated by the entrance of projects and the gaps created by a historically inadequate provision of education and a rural-urban gap in literacy. The production of paper documents is therefore an echo of the educational inequalities prevalent in the countryside. These documents might also be thought of as 'cultural artifacts' around which particular types of literacies are performed (Bartlett 2007). The production of these documents and their movements through the countryside highlights the spatial productions inherent in such a projectified countryside.

## *Project Space*

The movements of individuals and documents required to facilitate projects brings a focus to the spatial dynamics inherent in the project. Throughout the course of the project,

documents pass to and from rural areas (those targeted by projects) and cities (where projects are accounted for). Movements of individuals to receive and give trainings, the movements of documents back and forth from hillside to office, and the movement of SUVs up and down coastlines highlights both the hybrid actors and spatial aspects of the project assemblage. Through both moving in and discursively defining space, projects contribute to the production of the countryside.

By the 'production' of the Haitian countryside, I refer to the ways that space is socially produced, not a static setting in which interactions take place (Lefebvre 1991, Smith 1984, Harvey 1989, West 2006). This refers to the various ways that space in the countryside is defined and represented, and acknowledges the practices involved that constitute material and social changes in space. Discursive prescriptions and ongoing social practices and relationships are therefore actively involved in forging space itself. Lefebvre (1991) argues that such a process is forged through the dialectical relationship between representations of space, spatial practices, and representational spaces. Projects increasingly define spaces, labeling beneficiaries, creating maps and boundaries through representations of space. This then affects practices and movements of resources and materials. In turn, this contributes to these spaces as a tool of thought that dialectically contributes to the process of spatial production.

Space is always implicated in the frame of the project. Whether those spaces are rural settlements, or the offices of financial advisors or economists, regulation of space is fundamental to design and implementation. As many farmers recognized, their selectivity for implementation is often based on logics of access and availability. Projects, as Hirschman's early definitions posited, exist in "some minimum size, a specific location" (1966:1). Certainly, the definitions of projects have changed over the past fifty or so years. In rural Haiti, the spatial delineations of

projects create spaces of implementation and exclusion. By creating zones of project intervention and zones that are not in need, new 'virtualisms' are projected onto Haitian soils, whereby the implementations of projects are made to conform to the virtual reality of the definition of need (Carrier and Miller 1998, West and Carrier 2009). These fictive definitions are problematic as they become prescriptive, delineating what ought to be. Thinking about the 'production of space' breaks free of the static conception of space as an ontological 'given', and allows us to consider that space is always produced by social relations, actions, ideas, and imaginaries (West 2005:633 citing Lefebvre 1991:37).

For the IHC, the establishment of Lejè as a hub of operations is critically important to examining not only spaces of intervention, but spaces of absence in development aid. For the IHC, Lejè had become a place of comfortable seaside residence. Restaurants filled with expats, grocery stores with full shelves of imported liquor, and private generators that hummed away the power outages gave a feeling of improved infrastructure. IHC had based itself in Lejè. It was housed in the massive white office with a $200,000 boat parked out front. The new homes built for the managers by a French hotelier sat on a bluff overlooking the beach and ocean. But while the base of operations was firmly seated in Lejè, it had conceptually separated itself from Lejè as a possible zone of intervention. Pol, an agronomist from HOEA was shocked when I told him I had been to meetings working toward the formation of a Chamber of Agriculture. He told me they would have very little to discuss, as there was no agriculture in Lejè. Yet the hillsides behind Lejè were full of crops. Defined by its hotels, the coast of Lejè came to 'speak for' the rest of the commune (Callon 1986, Latour 2005). While presided over by a large white office building, the 8 million dollar project provided almost no funding for the town or commune in which it was based.

Leonel, a lead agronomist at IRO, lamented that such visions had markedly limited IHC's involvement in other domains in Lejè. There was, he said, no focus on the environment, only a focus on tourism. He wondered if they would ever start going into environmental issues, since such interventions would require work in the hills, not near the coastal tourism. Jak, the owner of a small beach-side restaurant, commented about the IHC presence in the area: "*M pa we anye"* (I don't see anything). He said that they had a meeting, they had 8.5 million dollars, and since then he hadn't seen anything. He said that they pay rent, but after that they don't do anything, "*M pa konnen sa l fe, sa l pa fe"* (I don't know what it does, what it doesn't do). But, he said, if they leave, it's a problem, as his restaurant is often populated by their employees.

In the areas of intervention, projects have the potential to make land newly productive. Agricultural land generally becomes productive by investments of labor which allow the harvest of crops for consumption and sale. In Haiti, agricultural production is not merely subsistence based. Rather, much of what is produced is sold at market for the purchase of other food products and commodities. Productive land is traditionally land that produces crops. But with the introduction of project based soil conservation interventions, we can think of land as productive in new ways. Marginalized lands are able to host soil conservation structures, producing not a commodity to be sold by the owner, but also wage labor to be distributed throughout the region.

The ways in which projects enter the countryside and dissect, reconstruct, and insert themselves in particular plots of land creates new possibilities for land. Land can become productive in different ways, growing another type of 'crop', the possibility of project intervention. The project as crop is not dependent on high quality soil, low slope, or beneficial rainfall. Rather, the potential for projects relies on different types of resources: associations, project requests, and legal recognition. It seeks out particular definitions of space: degraded land,

sloping land, and land that can be easily viewed and assessed. In those spaces, wage labor is fostered, and NGOs and associations can implement projects and declare success.

## *Project Time*

Tied in with the spatial ramifications of projects are the temporal bounds of projects. Not only are projects complicit in defining zones of implementation and non-implementation, they introduce new time frames into the countryside. The imposition of alternate time frames into agricultural production, and the spatial delineations imposed are ways in which projects are not only products but are themselves 'productive'.

Development projects have distinct time frames that organize and condition the work of conceptualizing, implementing, and evaluating. Agricultural time in Haiti seems to depend on two distinct modes of growth and action. One is the biological growth of trees, crops, and plants. For trees, the planting of a seedling, its consequent growth into a mature tree, and the possible generation of a fruit crop may take five years or more. The time frame for tree growth then, is relatively long. Within this longer span of growth, a second time scale is found based in seasonal work. For each crop, the year is divided into seasons of planting and harvest. Rarely do farmers have access to irrigation technologies or mechanized farming tools (JM Smith 2001), and as such there is heavy reliance on seasonal rains. Farmers in the countryside are acutely aware of planting times and harvesting times. Each crop has an ideal planting and harvest period corresponding to months of the year. When seasonal rains come late or not at all (as in the draughts in 2012 and early 2013), agricultural production is severely affected.

However, the temporal frames imposed by projects are quite different. Projects have a period of conceptualization, an opening and implementation, and a close. These divisions of time are enforced not by particular seasonal weather patterns or growth periods, but by administrative and financial deadlines. The incommensurability of development financing and the seasonal planting schedules more than once frustrated Festèl, the technical advisor of HOEA. Festèl was particularly concerned with the disbursement of the second year's project funding through UNONE. By the time the administrative 'ok' was given for the second year of work, HOEA had far less time to work in the current planting season, and had missed the largest sowing. The timing was illogical for agricultural work, but the financial requirements of the projects asserted their own logic and coherence. Reflecting on longer term projects, Ti Nej, an agronomist and coordinator of the IHC's agronomy projects, noted that the funding timeframes were too short for what HOEA wanted to do:

> For example, it takes a long time for fruit to come off trees, and then you have to develop a market and that takes a long time, 2-3 years. So you're looking at something that might take 10 years to develop. But the financing for projects occurs for 6 months, 1 year, 3 years at the most! If you just have short term funding, you look to short term projects, to something like soil conservation. He said that the quantity of funding means that it is hard to do something sustainable. For bread fruit trees, you're looking at something that is a 7-10 year project. In order to do something of this length you would need the state to do it. Otherwise, people have such small funding amounts that it really cannot be sustainable.
> (author interview notes, 8/1/12)

Thinking through the growth of trees and crops is a luxury not afforded to agronomists that I spoke with. A dependence on project based funding meant that rather than following the time of a tree and the production of its fruit, agronomists must follow the time of the project and

the production of its reports (the subject of Chapter Four). Ti Nej, towards the end of our conversation, lamented that orientation: he said that it's not just international funding, it is a weakness of the state too, that they do not have the strength to create a coherent vision. As he shook his head, he said that the NGOs have to hurry up with their work and produce something short term in order to produce a final report. Festèl too was consistently frustrated not only with the short span of projects, but the gap between projects. Between year one and year two of the funding that HOEA received through UNONE, there were months of inaction waiting for the bureaucratic approvals. For the IHC and HOEA in particular, gaps between projects (and even the renewal of project funding) hinged on administrative capacity to move documents between offices: from Lejè to Geneva, and from Geneva to Kenya, gaining signatures of departments and officials. During the time I was with HOEA, the wait for approvals through the UN administrative network caused multiple planting seasons to go by without action. Without the funding to sponsor their extension workers, the initiatives to replant particular hillsides and continue efforts of tree grafting were stopped, waiting until the next funding cycle. Festèl often threw up his hands in exasperation, saying how the system was oriented not to agricultural needs, but administrative ones.

Time, therefore, is constructed anew through the imposition of particular deadlines. Report requirements become the impetus of implementation, and as they do so, change the ways in which time is imagined in the countryside and in the offices of agronomists. Space and time are inextricably bound, and as new spaces are created through soil conservation structures those spaces are forged within a bureaucratic time bound by funding deadlines and finally translated into reports. As Ti Nej observed, the constraints of funding times and the need to produce reports

for funders obligates a quickly implemented intervention. Short-term vision is therefore not castigated by *pwoje* that enter and work with farmers but rather, encouraged.

## *Conclusion*

The spread of the project assemblage through the countryside constitutes the proliferation of not only an administrative unit, but the ideological and material assertions of that unit. As the concept of the project expands, it does so through its form as an assemblage, involving documents, concepts, space, and time. Projectification is the ongoing process in which project forms spread throughout a spatial area, and in which the materials and ideologies of the project become more and more integrated into the social context. The growth of the project globally can be viewed not only by the use of 'project' in the broader aid community, but also the way in which this particular unit has mobilized its own sciences. For example, business schools have Master degree programs in Project Management. Advertisements for project directors and coordinators abound on the development network 'Devex'. The proliferation of projects creates additional professions and positions that cater to its form. More broadly than just the Haitian countryside, projects as a global assemblage are becoming an increasingly dominant form of organizing the world and work.

Rather than consider the organizations in aid, or the individuals in aid as our primary unit of analysis, anthropology might be well served to focus on the project, continuing in the work of Steve Sampson (1996) in investigating the social life of projects. Through such a methodological turn, the assemblage of the project becomes one of the primary points of critical inspection. An

early ethnographic foray into this type of examination was Latour's (1996) "Aramis", a text in which there is no one organization followed, nor one particular individual. Rather the book follows the logic and narrative of a project itself, in that case the failed construction of an automated train system in France. Latour's focuses on the ways that projects do not fail, but are failed by their supporters. While this illuminates the history of one project, the Haitian countryside presents spaces that have been labeled over and over again as the hosts for projects. Such spaces oblige a focus on multiple projects, both past and present. Projects change spaces: as some are chosen for projects and some are not, spaces become recipients or are further cemented as *andeyò* (outside), as we saw with the farmers under the trees in the hills of Rotò. In efforts to become part of the selected group, grassroots organizations are pulled into the logics of the project, legally formalizing in order to become legible to the state, and to aid projects.

The project is not a neutral way in which a policy or program is implemented. It is a translation that prescribes a particular bureaucratic logic. Mosse (2005) argues that development continues to articulate particular ideologies through projects. But it seems as though the project is independent of a broader economic ideology, that it fits whatever economic theories or development fads that are in vogue, and yet maintains its own principles and characteristics.

In Haiti, the expansion of projects occurs along the lines of existing political economies of inequality. Fostered by historical negligence for rural Haiti, projects are the forms by which external social services and welfare can be accessed. But as projects travel through documents and bureaucracies, the gaps between urban and rural, literate and illiterate become more apparent and are even magnified. The political economy of the project is one that propagates inequalities and maintains power in the hands of the NGO class. As the producers of projects benefit by 'eating' the benefits, the supposed beneficiaries attempt to 'touch' whatever is left. A specialized

set of skills becomes necessary to acquire and navigate projects, highlighting their selective nature and bureaucratic orientation. Not only does this represent a fundamental problematic for aid distribution, it creates dire consequences for the way that environmental aid is undertaken. As Chapter Five will demonstrate, the acquisition and propagation of projects undermines possibilities of environmental repair.

# CHAPTER FOUR: Digging for Success

> *If we say that a successful project existed from the beginning because it was well conceived and that a failed project went aground because it was badly conceived, we are saying nothing.*
>
> Bruno Latour
> Aramis, or the love of Technology (1993:78)

If projects are the dominant form of aid in the Haitian countryside, what happens as soil conservation conforms to this particular form of disbursement? In this chapter, I hope to address that question by continuing an examination of soil conservation as an illustrative incidence of foreign aid. By inquiring into the way that soil conservation structures fail in many ways, but become remarkably successful in others, we are presented with not only the workings of conservation interventions, but with the financialized reporting structures that permeate development projects.

In his ethnography of aid and aid projects, David Mosse (2005) raises the possibility that a 'successful' project is not what it seems. He argues that what occurs 'on the ground' has little to do with the label of success that reaches the higher levels of management and eventually public discourse. We should therefore focus on the translations that occur through documents that create new models and representations of soil conservation. The models and representations written into reports and evaluations replace lived experience: they themselves become actors in development. For soil conservation, success has little to do with what occurs 'on the ground' (or rather 'in the ground'). In spite of non-adopting farmers, doubting agronomists, and shifting soils, contour canals continue to be implemented in the countryside. This chapter continues to

develop a sociology of translation (Callon 1986, Latour 1996, 2005) to understand how soil conservation projects became 'successful' enough to be repeatedly implemented over the course of 60 years. Within this frame, and supported by interviews with farmers, agronomists, and project managers, I argue that in Haiti the propagation of soil conservation structures is unrelated to their ability to conserve soil. The ethnographic task is to show how despite possible failure, there is a constant effort to create order and unity by tying actors together in the material and conceptual order of a successful project (Mosse 1994).

Foreign aid funding has cultivated an audit culture (Strathern 2000, Power 1997) that obliges contour canals as a conservation intervention. Audit culture refers to the social fields implicated in and produced by techniques and principles of financialized assessment in contexts seemingly far removed from the world of financial accountancy (Shore 2008). The financial roots of the audit have brought to life a set of social practices that align the financial with the moral, which fosters a set of procedures outside of which proof of accountability is invisible. Within these practices are deeply entrenched dynamics of power such that "an audit is essentially a relationship of power between scrutinizer and observed" (Shore and Wright 2000:558).

Historically, the genesis of such audits lies firmly in the verification of balances and movements of money (Shore and Wright 2000). In the 1980s and 90s this financialized accountability began to spread to new domains, creating assessments and measurements that both incorporate and alter areas of working life. As new sectors are incorporated, more individuals are subject to the audit, altering behavior to fit this particular form of assessment (Power 1997). For example, as the audit subsumed British higher education, teaching that might previously have taken place during hard to measure moments— in halls, over coffee, or meals— no longer counted in the distribution of funds (Shore and Wright 1999). The work of the audit is

not merely an exercise in some type of objective evaluation, but is based fundamentally in finance and financialized measurements.[52] More important than teaching or inspiring students was the production of plans, bibliographies, and other documents. New roles are fostered, and individuals become both subject to, and subjects of, the audit. These subject positions become reinforced through the practices fostered by the audit, as individuals engage in particular practices all due to audit form and function. In the higher education, for example, Shore and Wright (2000) note how London University would prepare for auditing visits by instructing students what to say and not say, coaching and attempting to change behavior in favor of the assessment.

In terms of soil conservation, while it may not be seen by agronomists as necessarily 'effective' in conserving soil, it becomes effective in the context of auditable aid projects. It is visible, quickly implemented, and a conduit of cash-for-work funding. As such, it can be rapidly evaluated, labeled successful, and after it has been labeled a success, can be leveraged to obtain more project based funding. In Chapter 2 and 3, I analyzed the history of soil conservation in Haiti and the growth and prevalence of the development project. In the present chapter I examine how these two networks, development projects and soil conservation structures (specifically contour canals), are woven together in design, implementation, and evaluation. First, I encounter the ruins and remnants of contour canals past, examining their eroded state as less than inspiring evidence of their efficacy in limiting the movements of soil. I then analyze the implementation of a contour canal-based intervention that is geared especially for its project evaluation. I travel with the agronomist Jude and his small team from the Lejè *Organization pou le Développement* (LOD) as they replant dead saplings in an effort to 'pass' the upcoming UN inspection. I then

[52] For more on the arbitrary and constructed nature of 'success' see Varenne and McDermott (1998).

examine a moment in the office of the *Haiti Organisation pour l'Environnement et l'Agriculture* (HOEA) in which the placement of interventions is in question not because of environmental or conservation theory, but because of the movements of project evaluators. Finally, I present the moment of the site visit, where representatives from the International Relief Organization (IRO), and the Initiative for Haiti's Coast (IHC) inspect the work of *Asosyasyon Travayè e Agrikiltè Damòn* (ATAD). In this performance of auditing, this "ritual of verification" (Power 1997), certain objects are made visible, others invisible, and the actors in a Latourian sense are more like actors in a Shakespearian sense: performing presumed roles, reciting re-hashed lines. Recognizing Latour's emphasis that we should be thinking of objects as actors in the sense of ongoing plays and networks, I want to highlight the way that broader theoretical analysis become instantiated in play-like moments of performance. But ever so often in these moments, prescribed scripts are broken and create jarring moments in which the coherence of the audit becomes ever so slightly destabilized. Through this examination of impact of a growing audit culture in the life of development projects, we can understand how conservation's dependence on projects becomes undermined by the logics of the project.

## *Ruins*

The early mornings in Damòn were memorable for their beauty and quiet activity. As I would walk up river, often the pre-dawn mist would still be hanging in the air. Walking down the road were children headed to school, slipping their shoes off to cross the river, or being carried on the backs of older students. Soon, the road that wound in and out of the river bed was relatively still. Men and women working in the fields had been up since before dawn, and those who were teachers (of which there were many in Damòn), were opening up their classrooms. It

was a lovely and quiet time to be outside. Within a couple of hours, the heat would intensify. But by early afternoon, most work in the field had been done, and saw the farmers returning to their homes.

One such early morning at about 8am, I met Franswa outside his house, where he was loading a wheelbarrow and a woven bag with seedlings. Franswa was short, with a wiry frame and an often quick tongue. He wore a black baseball cap, a grey polo shirt and brown shorts. He was the local CASEC (*Conseil d'Administration de la Section Communale*) and also worked for HOEA. We had walked together a number of times with other technicians from HOEA, and also chatted about the organizations in Damòn. Today he had a number of seedlings that he would be planting on the hill across the river from his house. The seedlings, it turned out, were left over from ATAD's work with IRO. IRO's model was to finance rural nurseries and then buy back the seedlings once produced. ATAD had produced more in the hopes that another NGO might find them desirable to purchase. When no such organization appeared, ATAD gave the seedlings to HOEA, so that Franswa could plant them on a hillside. After I greeted him with a firm handshake, he gave me a *makout* (straw bag) full of seedlings to carry. He told me to follow him across the river (which was about mid-calf for my legs) as he pushed the wheelbarrow filled with the seedlings, a pick, and a machete. After crossing the river, it was another 200 yards or so before we arrived at the big pyramid shaped hill.

Franswa was responsible for planting both trees and pigeon peas as an effort to reforest a steep hillside close to the elementary school in Damòn. Planting pigeon peas and tree seedlings on this land was an effort to ensure the survival of the small trees. Seeing the crops planted, farmers leading their animals to pasture would not let their animals loose in that space for fear of eating the valuable crops. Were it not for crops mixed in with the seedlings those leading the

animals to pasture would have little problem letting their animals graze on the short grasses. The hillside was extremely steep, so steep that I often had to grab onto tufts of grass while walking. Franswa brandished the pick expertly, and his footing was far more secure on the steep hill than mine. We were joined by another friend of Franswa's who helped me to plant. The two of us walked behind Franswa, planting seedlings where he had dug holes with the pick.

After planting our seedlings, we sat resting on the steeply sloping hill, looking over the valley as the sun continued to climb higher behind us. On the hillside across from us, highlighted by the rays of the rising sun, I noted some very faint brown lines that transected a green grass hill. Franswa had been involved in many *pwoje* in the area, and pointing across, I asked him if there had been a soil conservation project implemented in that space. He said yes. As we continued our conversation, Franswa told me that those ramps were made by an organization that at the time, I didn't recognize. After our work was completed, and we had chatted for a while, I made my way over to the home below that hill. A man by the name of Jon was sitting outside of his house with his family. We chatted and he offered to take me up on the hillside to show me his land. The hills were lined with short green grass, and a barely perceptible series of lines transected the slope. They had once been contour canals. Jon didn't remember when the canals were constructed, but that they were done through a project, and had been lined with trees as well. The problem, he told me, was that this was his grazing land, and his animals had eaten the seedlings that had been planted. He said he did see the benefit of the canals— if they had not been built, even more soil would have descended.

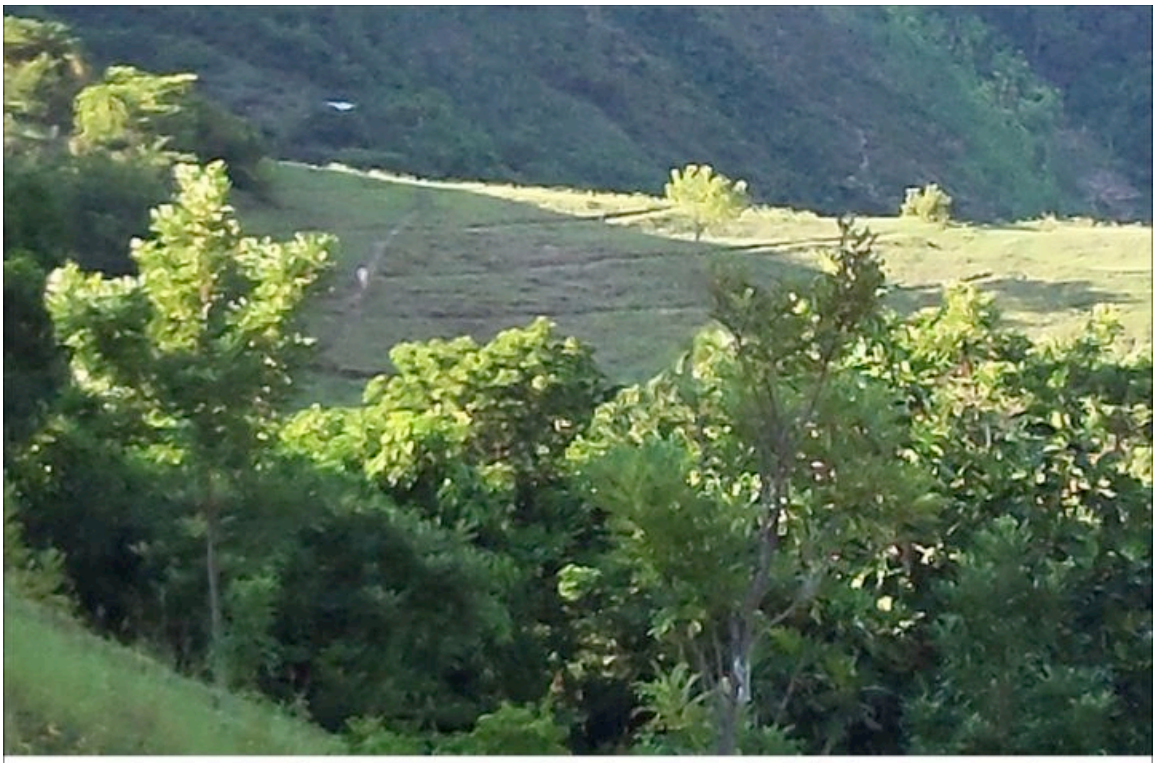

Image: In the Damòn valley- in the distance, slight lines across the hillsides, the ruins of previous contour canals.

Image: Close up of canal ruins

I talked to other leaders in the neighborhood, and found out that the intervention had been funded by USAID and implemented through an IRO in 2005, making it approximately 7 years old at the time. But by the time of my visit in 2012, the canals had ceased to be canals for many years now: they were but small mounds, remnants of interventions that had occurred a number of years ago. Such remnants are common occurrences in the implementation of soil conservation projects: "all too often, impressive new structures and practices slowly disappear, leaving little evidence of interventions and institutions"(Pretty and Shaw 1997:45). The scratches across the land not only represented the projects of years past, but a visible reminder of their near futility, and reminders of the mobile nature of Haitian soils. The canals had not been maintained, nor had the trees planted within them survived— they had become ruins. 'Ruins' often connote large

scale spaces grown over, remnants of empires past (Stoler 2008). But these smaller marks are similar, remnants of empires of aid. They are the physical reminders of the decay and ruin of projects past.

The project that sponsored these now defunct canals was funded by USAID through Title II of PL-480, the "Food for Peace" food aid program. For IRO, the implementer in the South, the goal was food security[53] and as part of a sub-goal of improving natural resource management, soil conservation was included. The impact evaluation published in 2007 is remarkably praiseworthy of this soil conservation intervention. The project had a performance/success level of 75% (though how the report arrives at such a percentage is unclear) (Louissant 2007). The farmer adoption rate was also high (70%) and was defined as farmers who implement "with the support of the program, some soil conservation practices" (Louissant 2007:28). Such a measure of adoption doesn't examine farmers into the future, or their willingness and desire to maintain or monitor canals, but essentially measures those who have maintained canals during the project as participants of the project. A 70% compliance with project goals is translated into terms of "adoption", though Jon's land and his land management practices might argue otherwise.

Such a report utilizes transformative metrics for the measurement and evaluation of soil conservation. Rather than contemplate the soil conserved, measures focus on the immediately observable: farmer's participation. Additionally, the report pays attention to the technical quality of the structures, measuring the respect of contour lines, appropriate slopes, structures well built, and respect of normal distance between structures. Such technical assessments in reports (which produced very high marks) focus attention on the visible. The complex nature of soil erosion presents multiple methodological challenges, but the measurement of canal presence and

[53] While ostensibly food security establishes food availability, USAID's deployment of the term has more historically been to incorporate Haiti into regional markets via free trade, and prioritize US food markets ahead of Haiti's (see Schuller 2008).

technical accuracy is easily visually assessed, and becomes another way in which the project can become 'successful'.

Such laudatory impact evaluations do not reflect the perspectives of senior agronomists at HOEA and IRO. Both Festèl (HOEA) and Leonel (IRO) expressed concern about the efficacy of structure based soil conservation. Festèl and Leonel were the senior agronomists for their respective organizations. Festèl had been educated in the United States, and in the small offices of HOEA he developed the agricultural strategies of the organization alongside the junior agronomists and technicians of the organization. Leonel was one of the senior agronomists in IRO, and managed most of the interventions on the Southern coast. In his office at the regional city, Leonel's expressed the importance of integrating vegetation: if the canals or *ramp*[54] have trees planted in them, he explained, they do prevent erosion. However, if they do not have trees, canals end up negatively impacting conservation efforts by upturning and moving previously packed soil and exposing it to the elements. Leonel noted that contour canals were not appropriate for all soil types, and that in some types of soil, the technique could be quite destabilizing. In a conversation at the HOEA offices outside the regional city, Festèl cautioned specifically against the use of contour canals and ramps in basaltic soil.[55] While both Festèl and Leonel had concerns about conservation structures, Festèl was far more critical of the interventions. He pointed out that even when a canal or ramp is constructed, and vegetation is planted on the ramp, there is no protection for the section of land that is immediately downhill from that ramp. Indeed, in previous work in the area, I had come across ramps that successfully held soil and trees, but right below them, the soil had worn away, revealing patches of bedrock. Rather than building structures to prevent erosion, Festèl was an advocate of 100% vegetative

[54] Ramp are the compliments to canals— the mounds of dirt that are piled on the hillside along the contour. Most often planted with trees or other vegetation.
[55] It should be noted that the soil on Jon's land would be classified as basaltic.

coverage and no tilling or digging. With this type of an intervention, he argued, the soil would be protected by constant leafy coverage across the entire plot in question. While they worked in different organizations with different funding sources and strategies, Festèl and Leonel agreed (on separate occasions) that the vast number of small organizations and associations throughout Haiti working on soil conservation depended too much on structures for soil conservation, rarely considering other strategies such as encouraging zero-tillage and full vegetative coverage. Leonel argued that most smaller organizations that act as aid subcontractors are really just interested in building soil conservation structures; they didn't think of other methods such as using different crop combinations, or about how farmers plant or prepare the soil. As a source of funding for wage labor in the community, and one of the dominant strategies for soil conservation in the countryside, few rural associations or neighborhood groups are in a position to rebuke such opportunities.

The contour canal is an idealized intervention, one that comes to be successful not in its conservation of soil over long periods, but through alternative forms of measurement and reporting. Theoretically, contour canals intend to trap soil, creating a boundary to slow the increased erosion. Contour canals come to represent stasis. For the reports and evaluations, the contour canal comes to 'speaks for' the rest of the soil (Callon 1986), asserting a space of land now 'conserved'. But the rest of the soil in a particular does not fall easily into such a definition. As Festèl points out, areas between contour canals are unaffected, soils freely moving between two boundaries. Even these boundaries are not static. In fact, the construction of contour canals is itself a movement of soil, and Leonel raises the possibility that conservation structures *create* erosive conditions by destabilizing the soil. The movements of soil over longer periods of time challenge the assertions of soil conservation.

We can think of the canals as infrastructures: "built networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space. As physical forms they shape the nature of a network, the speed and direction of its movement, its temporalities, and its vulnerability to breakdown" (Larkin 2012:328). Infrastructural thinking asks us to break down its constituent parts and ask what aspects have come to be included in the system. For contour canals, displacements of soil required in the construction of canals are not translated as soil movement as that would be detrimental to the intention of soil conservation. As soils move constantly downhill overtime, there is an effort to define contour canals in terms of a perceived static soil that exists 'within' the canal itself. Somehow the canal becomes separate than the soil that comprises it, lines are drawn as to what soils are included and which parts are not: "It is a moment of tearing into those heterogeneous networks to define which aspect of which network is to be discussed and which parts will be ignored" (Larkin 2012:330).[56] What is incorporated into the network is stable soil, while what is ignored is the soil that is constantly moving away, running downhill. Von Schnitzer notes how infrastructures highlight a strategy of government, and ultimately produce an ethics (Von Schnitzler 2008). As the following sections demonstrate, these ethics lead to a particular way of designing and implementing soil conservation projects.

## *Planting for Success*

By traveling with agronomists as they implemented and maintained soil conservation projects, I soon saw that the 'environmental good' of contour canals quickly faded into a reality

[56] Larkin (2012) continues to argue that while ANT can aid in picking apart this network, infrastructural thought questions which actors are part of the network and which are excluded.

clouded by project based funding. Project success is dependent on the continual work of actors invested in the project. Farmers, agronomists, farmers associations, NGOs, and multilateral institutions (such as UNONE and UNTWO) all have a vested interest in the successful completion of projects. The successful implementation of soil conservation projects is not about the conservation of soil, but as the USAID documents show, relies on a particular construction of success based on documentable interventions that are verifiable by audit.

For the Lejè *Organisation pour le Développement* (LOD), an organization based in Lejè,[57] soil conservation is a key financial component of organizational survival. The funding they receive from UNTWO paid for salaries, external debts, and provided funding for administrative continuity between projects. In 2012, LOD had done a construction project as a contractor for UNTWO, helping to rebuild infrastructural supports underneath a school. Upon hearing (from an inside source) that UN funding was shifting to the environment, LOD changed their orientation. As Jude said, "*kòb se kòmandan*" (money is the commander) (author interview notes 6/27/12). LOD subsequently submitted a project proposal and received funding from UNTWO to implement a soil conservation project. They would pay a team of workers to dig canals and plant seedlings on the outside bank of the canals.

LOD's project did not go as planned. Because of the heavy drought during the summer of 2012, many of the seedlings died after they were planted. After the end of the three-month funding cycle, a representative of UNTWO inspected the work of LOD. Upon seeing the dead seedlings, the inspecting agent declared that LOD had not sufficiently completed the terms of the project. As a result LOD was denied the final 10% of the project funding that would have stayed in their bank account once the project was completed. Jude, an agronomist and current president

[57] While not registered as an NGO, LOD behaved in similar ways to an NGO. LOD was registered as an organization through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

of LOD, described the payment structure: "the structure of these projects is that they give you 50%, then after you complete a portion [they give another] 40%, then at the end and completion of the project they give you 10%" (author interview notes 6/27/12). But the last 10% was withheld because the inspectors had told Jude "*fo nou wè pyebwa"* (we must see trees) (author interview notes 6/27/12). In an effort to reclaim the last 10% of the funding, Jude was intent on producing a 'successful' conservation project by replanting new seedlings. He had amassed debts to individuals in the community for project expenses and needed the last 10% for these payments. Jude invited me on a tree-planting trip in which we were to replace some of the seedlings that had been planted along contour canals.

We met at LOD's office later in the day and put some machetes, saplings, and buckets into Jude's large SUV. Joined by two other employees of the small organization, we drove out to where the original canals were dug. We drove to two spots; at each, we parked the vehicle and divided up the seedlings to be planted. We each grabbed a bucket of seedlings and walked out to the canals. As we started to plant the seedlings, Jude turned to me and said, "You know, they don't want us digging canals anymore;" I asked who "they" were. Jude turned and called uphill to Matìn, the other agronomist who was with us, and asked who had given them this information. Matìn, yelling back from higher up the hill, said that it was an agronomist from IRO who said that they should no longer dig the trenches, and while he didn't know exactly, Matìn thought the directive had come perhaps from the Minister of the Environment. I asked Jude why they were being told to no longer build contour canals. Again, Jude turned and called up to Matìn. Matìn yelled back to say that when the whole canal fills with water, the entire structure grows unstable and can crumble down the hill. In constructing canals, there was an inherent potential for ruin and the future creation of 'ruins'.

Throughout the afternoon, as we ventured to two sites where LOD had done soil conservation projects, we worked alone. Almost no one from the surrounding areas participated though Jude said he had spoken with community leaders regarding the activity (a few folks stopped by to chat, and one man stayed around long enough to plant a couple trees). A number of residents approached us as we lugged the saplings out of the car and planted them in the now barren mounds that transected the hillside. Each individual who spoke with us as we planted lamented the current situation. An older woman approached, grey haired, barefoot and shirtless, saying that a long time ago, it wasn't like this: people wouldn't let the animals eat all of the trees. This is what had happened in part in the first site: the field was used for grazing, and goats had eaten the seedlings. The woman added that we would be disappointed if we went down to the river, as we would see that people had cut down fruit trees for charcoal.

Up the road, we continued in our tree planting, and another man came up to us, saying that he had been telling people to not let animals lose because "*yo pèdi tan, yo vin plante yo* (they'll have wasted time to come and plant them [the trees])" (author notes, 8/6/12). The farmer made no appeals to a broader sense of environmentalism, or the possibility of improved fertility of the land. Rather, he focused on the time of the implementing group. Jude made similar appeals. As men and women passed by or hung around to observe, Jude told them that they should protect the trees that were being planted. He said they should tell others to protect them because "*Jude ta renmen"*(Jude would like it), and to another, "*ede m, pou m ta kontan"* (help me so I will be pleased) (author notes 8/6/12). Jude mentioned that they would help the soil, but his primary argument was based on a personalization of this project. He hoped to cultivate empathy not necessarily for the plight of the land or the landowners (who were absent), but for the organization and agronomist implementing the project.

The next morning, it became apparent that our re-planting efforts were very strategically driven. We again piled into the SUV that Jude had been given by the other NGO he worked for, and we drove up the bumpy rock and dirt road to a different region of Lejè. We picked up Ti Danyèl, whose farmers association had been sub contracted by LOD to build the canals (effectively sub-sub contracted by UNTWO). After a 20 minute car ride, we got out near a national school, at the top of a ridge line. Across a wide valley, very far in the distance, we could see the canals we had checked the day before. Below us, sloping downwards in a semi-circle, were lines of contour canals in the middle of an open field. We plopped the seedlings down at the top, grabbing three or four in our hands, using machetes to dig and replant along the mounds of the canals. As we stood planting and chatting, Jude pointed out that we were planting the seedlings in visible places so the donors would see the progress. He said they would "focus on visible areas next to roads" (author notes, 8/7/12). Turning to Ti Danyèl, he said that they would only really be continuing to monitor the areas next to the roads. The replanting intervention was positioned not for environmental impact and continuity, but for the continuity of 'the project'.

After many attempts, Jude finally persuaded UNTWO to re-evaluate the work. Jude later told me how UNTWO sent administrators to examine the project. He said that both *blan* and Haitians were there. In early September, Jude called me with good news. When the UNTWO saw the freshly planted trees, they labeled the project a success, and gave Jude and LOD the final 10% of the project funding.

For contour canal projects trees are planted to perform a symbolic function, to exist not principally for the conservation of the environment, but as evidence for the audit and for the continuation of the project. They need not live lives longer than a few months to become labeled as successful. But unfortunately for Jude, the trees didn't behave as planned, and died. The live

seedlings were chosen to 'speak for' the others (Callon 1986). Like the soil in contour canals, the trees that are living and visible come to represent all of the trees. The trees that are not visible, those far from the road or that died, become sidelined for the success of the project. Dead seedlings may indicate the ongoing conditions of draught, the implausibility of their maintenance, and even call into question the premise of the canals themselves. But because the live seedlings speak for the dissenters, these doubts are excluded. For the bureaucratic audit then, it is not only the way that actors are put into particular roles, it is that other actors (the dissenting ones) are ignored entirely. The live trees end up speaking for the dead, similar to the canals whose supposedly static dirt walls come to speak for the otherwise moving soils. In the evaluation and implementation of projects, there is a fierce primacy of the successful, in which the successful obscures the failed or the dubious.

The absurdity of the translation of small saplings into "successful projects" did not escape Jude. He said to me "it would be so much better if there was a way that the funders could support more long term accompaniment" (author interview notes, 8/6/12). He lamented that he had to hire groups of people for a short time, rather than go slowly and give continued organizational support. Jude said that the project only worked because some money entered the community, but not because it affected the environment. Unfortunately, he said, "you cannot change the strategy of the *gwo misye* (big men)" (author interview notes, 8/6/12). For Jude, the powerful controllers of aid defined the form of projects, and working outside that form was seemingly impossible. The next two sections discuss how project forms alter and affect the design and evaluation of interventions.

## *The Designs of Projects and Movements of Evaluators*

The design of projects is deeply affected by forms of evaluation. In the late 1990s, a development project crept through Southern Haiti, enrolling NGOs and farmers associations in implementation, quite similar to the IHC. Multiple actors (NGOs, farmers associations and donors) were involved in the contracting and subcontracting of aid. The name of the project was *Proje Sove Tè* [sic] (Project Save the Land), and it hoped to increase local income and reduce environmental degradation by encouraging high value crops, reforestation, and soil conservation (Howard 1997). Memories of this were still fresh: "PST" was brought up at various times by farmers and by the NGO employees I worked with. It was part of the USAID "Targeted Watershed Management Project" efforts to improve agricultural productivity in the South. But the project came under a great deal of scrutiny for its design. The focus on 'visible' impacts had a profound effect on the way that the intervention was designed. As critiqued by in an article published in 1997, USAID's pressure for empirical success "drove NGO staff to concentrate directly on measurable project-based improvements (hedgerows, check dams, and fertilizer use) to the neglect of improvements of quality of life (democratic participation, physical health, or economic sustainability)" (Howard 1997:10). Particular types of evaluation affect both the implementation and design of projects.

Part of contemplating how soil conservation will be successful depends on the ability of such an intervention to be seen and counted. The emphasis on visibility and measurement positions conservation as secondary to hosting donors and preparing for assessments. Of concern is not only the possibility of the evaluation, but the evaluators themselves. The traits of past evaluators and donors, their physical abilities, and their modes of transport become central actors in design. For example, in Brown et al.'s (1995) evaluation of the Pan American Development

Foundation's JOBS project, one of four elements of the sampling methodology is the ability of evaluating team members to get to the site. These preferences, including the relative accessibility of a region, are considered by NGOs as they select the locations of their interventions. In order to facilitate the required visibility of projects, space had to be defined in terms of accessibility of the perceived mobility of auditors.

The visit of project evaluators can become a central logic around which the project is constructed. Each Monday, as I sat in the HOEA office, ideas were traded back and forth between agronomists, technicians, and administrators. Sipping on coffee and slightly cooled by the whir of fans, we sat through drawn-out meetings that offered opportunities for opinions on projects, and more often than not, politics, to be tossed back and forth. During one meeting, the technical leader Festèl put forth that he was interested in planning a visit: representatives from the regional Ministry of Agriculture would be invited to see HOEA's work, as would the representatives of the IHC/UNONE, who were currently funding HOEA's work. He said that he wanted to select particular parcels of reforestation and grafting[58] that this commission could visit. To begin they picked the two neighboring communes of Rotò and Lapè, saying that the visit would enter up through one valley to see a nursery, cross the dividing hills, and return down the other valley to see the work of tree grafting and tree planting that had gone on in the area. After touching on other themes, this was revisited: one of the agronomists, Pyè, was adamant that the visit to the hilly interior of Rotò and Lapè was a bad idea: "when you have auditors and evaluators coming, you have to have something on the roads so that they can see something without walking…do you really think evaluators can actually walk up far into Rotò after sitting

[58] Grafting is a process by which cuttings of one variety of tree are spliced onto the branches of another variety of the same species. The technique is often used with mangos, altering the type of mango that the tree produces and favoring large, exportable varieties.

years behind a desk?" (author notes, 8/20/12). One of the junior agronomists replied, "But Scott came up and did it without problem." Dismissing the rebuttal, Pyè simply said, "you need to "*fe eksperyans* (have experience)" (author notes, 8/20/12). The director intervened, saying yes, but we did have the previous donor contingent walk far up in order to see our projects.

Afterwards, Pyè gave me a ride back to the regional city. Continuing the afternoon's debate, he asked me why I thought IRO had all their projects next to the road: "it's because they are aware of how the evaluators work" (author notes, 8/20/12). Pyè said that the key pieces for an evaluator visit are making sure they are well rested, have plenty of water, and have plenty of food. If they walk around and have a headache, stomachache, or otherwise don't feel well, it will be a bad evaluation. He said that for one of the evaluations, they had someone come in who was overweight and had to have two people escort the man through the hills, holding his hand the entire way. He said that you can't make evaluators walk all that distance. "Have a couple of projects by the road, have bottles of water, and have food ready for them— that's the way to do it" (author notes, 8/20/12).

This sort of design is based in a politics of movement, and an embodiment of class differences. The harsh heat of the Caribbean sun, the steep hills, and the small footpaths that link clusters of houses and farming plots all become imagined as a sort of unsuitable journey. Bodily capabilities and needs become not only relevant, but primary. The imagined mobility of out-of-shape Haitian bureaucrats or foreigners is imposed onto the Haitian landscape. The pathways that are well traveled by rural Haitians become newly impassable. Riverbeds crossed every day by 6 year olds going to school then become an unviable pathway for such evaluating bodies. As the head of HOEA noted with the previous donor commission, these types of limited mobilities may not be real or accurate, but are rather the imagined paths of evaluators.

Mapping the movements of bodies becomes a strategy for technicians looking to keep planting quotas as well. Frank, a technician for HOEA, commutes to Rotò from the offices of HOEA and supervises Telo, an agent from Rotò. In the HOEA bureaucracy of agronomy the agronomist directs technicians, who then direct the *agan sou teren* (agents on in the field). One day, Frank, Telo and I were walking on one of the steeply sloping, denuded hills in the middle of the Rotò valley. Frank pointed out where Telo had done well, and gave small pointers on how Telo should continue to plant trees in order to start a reforestation of the hillside. But as he did so, he started to correct Telo's original intentions. He told Telo to start planting in another direction because Telo would have otherwise planted where Festèl, the technical director, would not have visited. Frank's tree planting logic again incorporates the idea of a supervisory audit. Such a supervisory audit is not based on the logic of reforestation, but rather on a logic of the imagined body of the auditor.

## *The Project Assessment*

By examining the actions of actors enmeshed in an audit culture (Strathern 2000, Power 1994) we can understand how agronomists, farmers, and NGO employees become oriented not only around environmental conservation, but concomitantly, and perhaps more significantly, around the concept of the auditable development project. Specifically, practices of hearing, seeing, and reporting become primary, while the supposed goal of environmental conservation becomes secondary.

This logic was laid bare during a 'site visit' by IRO and UNONE/IHC. I was unaware that the visit was happening that afternoon, and began my day as I would any other day. I met up with Monkè just after 5:30am, on the dimly lit road outside his house in lower Damòn. We led two rather boney cows to pasture, walking at first through the valleys that defined the bottom of the rising hills. Much of our walk was through the trickling streams of river beds, then rising up into the steep, rolling hills that were covered only with very short grass— a half-inch long at most. The valley full of steep slopes was, except for a few parcels of peanuts, largely used for grazing. The early hours saw others leading cows to eat, and a little later on, work groups (for harvesting peanuts) passing over one hill, down into the valley, and up over the next. We tied down the cows in the areas of Monkè's land where they would eat for the rest of the day on short green grasses. Once we had moved up higher onto the slopes and crests of the hillsides, the brilliant blue Caribbean appeared behind our backs. The day was warming by the minute as the sun rose higher in the sky. Walking through the hillsides, Monkè and others who joined us described the parcel in terms of the owner. Such a space belonged to this family or that family.

As we returned to lower Damòn, we approached from downstream, walking up the middle of the river. Looking up, a white SUV crossed the river (now more of an ankle-height trickle) in the distance. Thinking little of it, Monkè and I went up to his house and rested, drinking water and some juice he bought for us both. Shortly, one of the members of ATAD walked by saying that there was some sort of event going on. I walked up the road to where the ATAD tree nursery was located. In front of the nursery hung a sign with the insignia of both IRO and IHC, indicating they had given funding to ATAD for the nursery. While the money flows through IHC, IRO is the implementing NGO, and they had selected and funded ATAD to implement. The white SUV was parked on the road next to the nursery. Nelson and his father,

both active in ATAD, were standing near the SUV. Nelson relayed that there were two *blan,* and some Haitians, and they were— he paused searching for the name— "what is it when you sort of give the organization money?" (author notes, 11/8/12). "*Bayè fon?*" (Donors?) I responded. Yes, he said. Just then, through the nursery walked a group of ATAD members and five visitors: an American administrator and two Haitian agronomists from IRO, and a European program manager and a Haitian environmental and agricultural specialist from IHC/UNONE. We knew each other well, and laughed seeing each other out of the context of the Lejè IHC office. As we hugged and greeted, they asked me what I had been doing out so early in the morning.

Quickly after greeting, the 'audible' aspect of the audit began. Two groups formed in separate circles in front of the nursery. One was speaking Kreyòl, and was composed of the five or so members of ATAD who had been leading the visitors. The other group immediately in front of the white SUV was speaking French, and included of the visiting commission, and most notably the three *blan* (including myself). The two groups formed around the language of offices and bureaucracy, and the language of the countryside. IHC employees began asking questions not to the farmers, but to the representatives from IRO. Fairly quickly, Manuel, the European working for the IHC, began asking questions about the project. Manuel, with his small note pad in hand, asked Leonel in French why they chose this space specifically.[59] Leonel responded that another agronomist from IRO had been here many times and had decided on that space. Manuel then asked who had been involved, if they had involved the local authorities. Leonel responded: "yes, local authorities had been involved in the execution of the project" (author notes, 11/8/12) (this was suspect: at the end of the visit, Franswa the local CASEC gave a long and tense speech about he had not been involved, nor invited to participate). Manuel also wanted to know about a

[59] Manuel did not speak nor understand *Kreyòl*.

community mapping exercise that had happened in the community earlier in the year. Leonel said they still had the map. Moments later, Manuel told Stephanie that she should put the community map (that had been made for an entirely different project) in an annex for the report. Strolling down the road, pen and pad out, Manuel continued to ask for the details of the project: "have the organizations in the area been involved in the work?" (author notes, 11/8/12). The group stopped, and Leonel and Sandra of IRO quickly say that the only official organizations that are recognized are ATAD and one other. But Lebèl, the president of ATAD, said "there are many, many more, and we did incorporate them" (author notes, 11/18/12). Manuel, now addressing Lebèl directly, asked Lebèl how these other organizations had been involved. Lebèl responded that the group members had been given wage labor during the implementation of the project.

Manuel's questions were attempts to verify certain aspects of the project by hearing them. Though 'government participation', or 'community participation' were not possibly seen, they could be asked about and heard. Audit's roots come from the Latin "to hear" (*audire*) (Shore and Wright 2000). In the above example, hearing becomes a public event, a way in which the long and complex processes, not neatly bound, are made audible, or legible (Scott 1998). But through this process of scrutiny, came the possibility that IRO, in charge of ensuring the success of the ATAD project, might not know all the details of the project.

We arrived at a series of ravine walls that had been built with stones, small barriers intended to slow the often torrential rain that could careen down ravines during storms. We stopped to note the first wall, which was visibly crumbled. Lebèl turned to the group and explained that in fact, this wall fared quite well in the first two heavy rains it endured, but that it was toppled by Hurricane Sandy. The two senior agronomists, Aubè (of IHC) and Leonel (of

IRO), examined the wall and each commented on how the wall might be improved. The rest of the group started walking up the ravine. As we walked further up, the stone walls were notably less and less damaged. Aubè pointed to the walls that were intact, and told Manuel that they should take pictures of these walls. Manuel took out a camera, and snapped pictures of a pristine wall. The crumbled wall, while most visible from the road and most indicting to the project, was not captured by the pictures, while the 'successful' walls got the attention of the evaluators.

The evaluating group asserted their role as experts and the holders of knowledge, while it was presumed that the rural population fell into the role of the empty glass, to be filled with that knowledge. But these roles were not always adhered to, causing tension in the performance of the audit and the performance of expertise. Arriving at the top of the small hill where the ravine walls had been built, the group formed a circle under the shade of trees and started to talk. Aubè asked whose *lakou* they were in. The owner of the house came out, crossing the courtyard and approached the group. Aubè began to instruct him as to the proper ecological care of his land: "if you plant more trees above those walls, you'll have really good trees— you can't let this ravine grow" (author notes, 11/18/12). After this recommendation and assertion of the benefits and responsibilities of conservation, the owner responded. "Excuse me," he said, "but actually when I arrived here, there was a huge ravine, and I started planting coconuts and trees and made the ravine disappear. Before Sandy there was no ravine at all" (author notes, 11/18/12) One of the ATAD members clarified that his tree planting had not been under a project, but rather, "personal work." By himself, the land owner had planted trees that started to reduce the ravine. Aubè seemed taken aback, and offered no further comments. The possibility that the owners of the property were protecting the land in their own way was a possibility that did not exist alongside the predetermined interventions of IRO.

As the evaluation visit drew to a close, the performance of the audit was shaken again by moments in which the script was disturbed by unexpected commentary. The morning's visit was ended with a ceremonial exchange of thanks. After Lebèl and the visiting evaluators gave their words, Franswa, who had joined us and was as the local government official (CASEC), was given an opportunity to talk. He did not continue in the formalities of thanks and optimism. Rather, he gave an uncomfortably long diatribe on how he, as the local government official had not been invited to take part in the project. He repeated this a number of times: *"pa janm pa janm invite m"* (They have never, ever invited me). Lebèl interjected multiple times telling Franswa he was speaking to much. But Franswa continued. Finally, Aubè (of IHC) said "ok let's go," and slowly the group started descending back down the hill to the road. The entire display felt incredibly uncomfortable. Franswa's motivations for such a speech were unclear. He clearly referenced his position as a government official, but also was the primary *ajan* for HOEA in the area. Whatever his motivations may have been, his display drew attention to what was unseen by the evaluation. It brought up the possibility that the claims of government participation and organizational participation were contestable. Franswa also drew attention to the possibility that others in the community could disagree with the project. His concerns were not followed up with questions, but, in an effort to maintain the existing script of the evaluation, were quickly dismissed. In these scenes of auditing, roles were prescribed, but not always followed.

This display is part of a performance, the "ritual of verification" that accompanies the audit (Power 1997). Such performances both draw on and reinforce roles defined by aid and institutionally driven soil conservation. These acts presuppose the auditor and audited, the 'expert' and 'unknowing farmer'. As discussed in Chapter Two, soil conservation interventions rely on assumptions of degradation that hinge on the farmers negligence and the expertise of

planners and agronomists. As such, agronomists in Haiti enter these scenes met with deference. For example, *agwo* (short for agronomist) is a title used in the countryside much like "Doctor." The roles of actors are constructed prior to the moment of performance, but are further constituted by the performance itself.

James Ferguson (1999) examines 'localism' and 'cosmopolitanism' through the way that each is performed, using Judith Butler's (1991) thoughts on performance. As Butler (1991) notes, in such performances, the 'doer' may be constituted in the deed. Therefore the performance of differences between the audited and auditors, farmers and agronomists, actually does the work of further constructing these categories. While acknowledging existing assumptions, actors repeat and reinforce their roles. Aubè, the expert, lectured the rural poor on agronomy, solidifying his position in relationship to that of the farmer. Manuel, the auditor, probed, questioned, and most importantly, documented the audit, cementing his role as the 'impartial observer'. But the structure and script of this performance is disturbed at many points, and allows for negotiations and novelty. The expert agronomist, performing his expert knowledge of ravines, is challenged by a rural resident who has taken conservation measures into his own hands. A government official, unhappy with the project, brings attention to his marginalization and calls into question the veracity of previous statements and claims of 'government involvement' . The imperative of the script implores those with particular roles to speak: Leonel and Sandra must respond confidently to Manuel's question about participating organizations, even if they are incorrect.

The audit highlights not only the performance but the focus on the auditory and visual nature of the audit. This process of hearing and seeing is selective. The crumbling walls do not fit the role of success, and are quite literally stepped over to find other actors that better fit the

role. Hearing and seeing become a public events, ways in which long and complex processes, not neatly bound, are made audible, or legible (Scott 1998). There is a simultaneous focus on the visible, and the timelessness implied by a picture or inscription. While the visit itself is a moment in time, it aspires to much more. It seeks to extract process from the moment. A particular history of the project is constructed based on selections of visibility and legibility. Perhaps, as Strathern (2000) offers, the audit is transparency made visible. However, the very rhetoric of transparency conceals the process of concealment.

## *Conclusion*

Soil conservation structures are theoretically an ideal method of intervening into the anthropogenic erosion of soil. Trenches dug along the contour and held in place by the deepening roots of trees theoretically hold back the trickling descent of soil. If paired with vegetative cover, they would form bands of defense against ravines dug by continual rains. As canals fill with soil, they could even become fertile planting beds. Examples outside of Haiti demonstrate that soil conservation structures can be used in positive ways to combat erosion (Tiffen et al. 1994) But largely, the building of these structures has been problematic: "In virtually all these sites, structures and practices have not persisted. Projects assume that maintenance will occur. Yet as farmers are treated at best as labourers for construction, they have few incentives to maintain structures…All too often, impressive new structures and practices slowly disappear, leaving little evidence of interventions and institutions" (Pretty and Shah 1997:45). As canals fill with soil, they cover up the evidence of intervention, while making more visible the continual realities of the slow violence of soil erosion (Nixon 2011). This ongoing degradation is hidden behind an

operational logic that undergirds the project, working to meet quantitative targets, disburse funds, and reproduce professional identities (see Mosse 2004). The logics of project implementation, design, and evaluation ultimately undermine the goals and possibility of environmental conservation. As Jude explained to me while planting seedlings, these structures are neither maintained or adopted, and potentially cause more harm than good.

As demonstrated by this chapter, when visibility takes front stage, questions are raised about "what that visibility conceals" (Strathern 2000). Processes and objects that are made visible simultaneously obscure other processes and other objects. The unsuccessful and the complex are dismissed in the search for success. Power (1994) argues that the audit has become the control of control: what is being assured is the quality of control systems rather than the quality of first order operations. As the development apparatus has spread throughout Haiti, so too has audit culture. This trend has previously been noted in the work of Christian Vannier (2010), who noticed that grassroots institutions in Haiti are increasingly audited in an attempt to remove politics from their organizations. This work extends the conversation of audits and aid in Haiti by demonstrating how audits of aid create new procedures, pathways, and norms. The assemblage of the project and its particular logics of assessment have allowed these structures to be 'successful' year after year.

As the project form enters into Haiti, it aligns with the modernist ideals of institutional soil conservation interventions. Contour canals emerge oddly as a soil conservation failure, yet a project success. Indeed, contour canals are an infrastructure supported far more by project documents than by Haitian soils. The project assemblage, its 'experts', paperwork, and assessments, give legitimacy to the physical structures, and lead to their propagation. That is far more than the soils, trees, and farmers provide, and soon the documents and ruins of canals may

be the only physical signs of their presence. But the impacts of such interventions extend far further into the countryside. As the next chapter explores, the constant implementation of such structures constitutes a profound and diffuse form of power, implicating not only soils but subjectivities.

# CHAPTER FIVE: Governmentality, Labor, and the Project

The hills above Lejè are dry and white. With the sun overhead, the chalky road acted as a mirror, reflecting the bright sun back from the ground. Covering my eyes with sunglasses and my neck with a handkerchief only somewhat diminished the heat. I had hopped on a motorcycle early that Saturday and come down from Powapè to meet with an older man named Kristofè and his work group. They were going to be digging contour canals in a hillside neighborhood that was an hour or so walk outside of Lejè. I had gotten off the motorcycle at the bottom of the hills and started walking up the rocky dirt road, but was soon given a lift by an agronomist who shared a mutual friend. As the road rose further up into the hills, land sloped steeply away on either side of us. Driving on the ridge-line provided spectacular views of the patchwork of farming parcels (some plots with contour canals), and if I turned around, I could see the incredibly blue Caribbean. We arrived to where the work party was, and I thanked my lift. I swung my leg off of the motorcycle and jaunted down the hillside, which was covered with extremely well-manicured grass— the work of goats, the insatiable landscapers of Haiti. Halfway down the slope was a finished canal, perhaps two feet deep, with its 'bund' (the mound of removed soil) placed on top of the downhill wall. Picks, hoes, and shovels were being swung by about 15 men in ragged shorts, many without shirts. Another man, slightly overweight and in a remarkably clean and pressed polo shirt and jeans, stood with arms crossed, watching. They were part of a work group being paid to build contour canals. As I would come to learn, it was

only through this sort of wage labor that contour canals were built— individual farmers would not engage in such practices without projects.

Image: Digging contour canals in Lejè

The man watching over their work was the agronomist in charge. He would later tell me that he had gone to school for agronomy but had really learned soil conservation through practice, largely under the tutelage of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), an organization funded by the Organization of American States. PADF had worked in the South for many years largely in soil conservation projects and contour canals. Now he was part of a small community organization funded through the Catholic Church that was paying for this work to be done. The land did not belong to him, nor to his organization, nor to any of the men being paid to

dig. The owner was not there, though evidently he had been informed as to the importance of the work. I pitched in and helped to dig, chatting with some of the workers and the group president.

After a while of talking about the history of the group, Kristofè, who had invited me, took me up the hill, past another couple of canals to his house. Kristofè's son brought us some coconuts, and I asked him the question that had been on my mind for a while: did people build contour canals by themselves or only with projects? I had seen a number of these interventions, and for each, the work had been sponsored by a project of some sort. Kristofè's son told me "others see it as a way to make money; planters won't do it by themselves" (author interview notes, 9/15/12). "For example, with Kristofè's group, they have a contract to do the work, and then they will be paid." I asked then, if people know the importance of soil conservation. "Yes," he said, "they do know its importance" (author notes 9/15/12). After finishing off the coconut water, Kristofè and I returned to the hillside where the rest of the group was working. I asked them the same questions, if they saw soil conservation as a positive intervention. They gave collective nods, a few offering that it was good for the land and good for people too. I then asked if planters did soil conservation by themselves, without the financial aid of a project. No, they said, shaking their heads. One said to me quite definitively: "planters cannot do it by themselves" (author notes, 9/15/12). Such logic of participation seemed to be nearly ubiquitous in the countryside.

While Chapter Three investigated how the countryside has been 'projectified' and Chapter Four examined how the form of the project affects conservation efforts, this chapter will look at how the project logics constitute a diffuse form of governance. First, I will think through the literature on governmentality and environmentality as it applies to aid interventions. I then present how farmers have come to understand contour canals as existing almost primarily within

the domain of the project. Throughout interviews conducted in the Damòn valley and beyond, rural residents described how soil conservation would not be done in the absence of a project. As an example of the divides created by project logics, I examine contemporary collaborative labor. By contrasting the historic trends of Haitian labor forms with the infusion of project based labor, I show that not only are the two seen by rural residents as qualitatively different, but are maintained as separate spheres of labor. Finally, I think critically about how this particular instantiation of environmental conservation succeeds in cultivating not environmental concern, but project concern.

Individuals' behavior is targeted by the incentives of soil conservation projects: monetary compensation is used to incentivize the building of contour canals. But in the case of Haiti, the incentives are accepted without the accompanying behavior change. Efforts to cultivate discipline through incentivized conservation are foiled by the 'counter conducts' of farmers unwilling to adopt and maintain structures (Foucault 2009). But the 'failure' to discipline is only one aspect of what occurs: rather than focus on what the project fails to produce, we might focus on what it does produce over nearly six decades. While projects fail in regulating the actions of individuals, they begin to even more profoundly shape the relations among individuals, space, and time. The regulation of actions is easily observed in its reward structures and shortcomings, but a more "fundamental and saturated" (Nealon 2008) form of power permeates lives and exists almost without recognition. Quietly and powerfully, projects come to establish new standards and expectations. Instead of a form of environmental governmentality (or environmentality (Agrawal 2005), we are faced with forms of *project* governmentality, a type of intense power that restructures norms and relationships, and is fostered by and oriented towards, the project.

## *Environmentality and Governmentality*

This type of analysis requires an investigation of the multifaceted ways in which governing occurs. Through reading Foucault's historical portrait of power, we begin to understand how modes of power have morphed throughout time such that governmentality becomes an aspect of the most 'intense' and pervasive form of power: biopower. At the beginning of Foucault's (1977) timeline of power is the 17th century sovereign. Through ceremony and torture, the King seeks obedience in subjects and targets the surfaces of individual bodies. But throughout the years, this mode of power begins to increase in intensity and diffuseness, and changes its target. By the 18th-19th century, the primary (but by no means exclusive) mode of power becomes discipline. Instead of focusing on the surfaces of individual bodies, power instead targets 'actions' through training and exercise. The goal, rather than pure obedience (which was the goal of the sovereign), is docility. As power continues to change throughout time, it becomes more economic: more ubiquitous, with fewer costs, and less political and economic resistance (Nealon 2008). The mode of power has shifted from protecting the sovereign to protecting the society. But it is in the 19th and 20th century that power reaches its least centralized and arguably most intense form: biopower. Biopower does not do away with discipline, but instead exists on another level and on a different scale (Foucault 2003). While discipline works on controlling the body through training and exercise, this new form of power is applied "not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being" (Foucault 2003:242-43). Biopower works on entire populations, and takes on life as its target. It goes from "institutional training exercises (birth, school, work, death), to force coming to bear primarily on

that subject more ubiquitously through her very life and lifestyle" (Nealon 2008:48). The desired outcome of biopower is not the regulation of particular actions, but rather 'autocontrol'. Foucault's neologism 'governmentality' names this movement from controlling bodies to regulating relations among them. Governmentality works precisely at the orientation and idiosyncrasies of everyday life, a way of governing that moves out of institutional domains and into regulating relationships and norms. Whereas discipline focuses on training and exercise for docility, governmentality is focused on producing ever more subjectivities (Nealon 2008).

Critical literature of aid has examined how policy regulates social life and makes subjects and citizens not simply by repression and overt control, but by engendering subjectivities and aspirations (Mosse 2005, Li 2007, Li 2002, Ferguson 1990). Governmentality allows us to consider how the governing of self and population is an attempt at getting individuals to behave "as they ought" (Scott 1995). In considering the "art of government", one must simultaneously consider how governmentality affects the formation of political subjectivities (Gould 2006). Early use of the concept of governmentality in development literature began with James Ferguson (1990), whose deployment of the concept was far more directed towards the idea of a spreading state administrative apparatus. Tania Li (2007) uses the term in a more refined way, noting how colonial powers were faced with the problem of creating the 'other' and maintaining difference yet at the same time incorporating populations into a single system of domination. Governmentality has also been applied to the definition and construction of populations in relation to space and resource governance (Watts 2003). These subjectivities exist not only in relation to the government, but can imply a type of 'non-governmentality' in which the regulation of natural resources and the citizenry is fostered not by governments themselves, but by non-governmental actors (Jackson 2005).

The concept of 'environmentality' arose as a way to transfer discussions of governance to the realm of the environment (Luke 1999, Agrawal 2005, Fletcher 2010). Luke (1999) uses environmentality to explain how particular types of knowledge open the possibility for governance based on the construction of environmental truths. Arun Agrawal (2005), perhaps the best known of the environmentality thinkers, applies the notion of governmentality to empirical data, examining how technologies of government fostered new subject positions concerned with the environment. Studying the forest management policies of Northern India, Agrawal showed how rural villagers had changed their attitudes and practices towards forests. Previously, villagers were the expressed enemy of state forest managers. However, a series of interventions in the form of community decision-making and village councils were used to foster a sense of environmental concern. The lens of environmentality developed in his text allows Agrawal to analyze how environmental regulation is achieved not by forcing people toward such goals, but by making them into accomplices. Fletcher's (2010) examination of environmentality divides the concept into four typologies: neoliberal, disciplinary, sovereign, and 'truth' based. But such a typology of governmentality is in contrast with some of the deep readings on how governmentality fits into Foucault's ideas of power. Nealon (2008) argues that governmentality is the primary hinge of biopower, while discipline and sovereignty are different modes of power. Nealon sees governmentality therefore as a far more pervasive regulation of life than discipline's focus on actions through institutional regulation. While Agrawal focused on the successful regulation of subjectivities, this research focuses on the ways that governmentality is achieved in ways that are unintended. As observed by Foucault, government interventions never achieve what they aspire to (Foucault 2009).

By examining soil conservation projects in Haiti as a form of governing, we can begin to empirically dissect the forms of power exerted. Beginning with 'expert' technical advice and knowledge in Haiti (as examined in Chapter 2), soil conservation structures become an easily implementable response to environmental damage. In order to facilitate the application of such knowledge, institutions such as NGOs and community associations work through projects to carry out conservation measures. Incentivized rewards are used in hopes of facilitating particular environmental actions. But these efforts do not achieve their goals: attempts to control the actions of farmers fail and in the end the rural population has not been 'disciplined' towards a continued environmental engagement. In spite of the failures to regulate behaviors/actions/capacities, the technology of government (the project), continues to produce particular logics and relationships through its repeated presence. Following from Chapter 3, new spatial and temporal relations are introduced, new labor forms are introduced, and organizational and individual norms begin a slow shift toward the development project. In a fundamental way, projects have become part of the logic of people's lives. They become less about governing the 'actions' of individuals and more about fostering 'lives' lived as project beneficiaries. As power becomes less restrictive, it becomes more intense, slowly saturating the field of actions and of possible actions (Nealon 2008). To understand some of the diffuse ways in which life is altered, the following sections will focus on wage labor in the countryside as a new form of organizing labor and compensation.

## *From 'Culturally Alien' to Ever-Present*

To make sense of how farmers discussed their interactions I turn to early research on soil conservation. That research, authored mostly by development agencies, focused on the economic rationale behind farmer adoption. Since the 1970s, development planners identified farmers lack of "land-use technology" as a key cause of degradation. Therefore most projects have focused on encouraging farmers to adopt particular soil conservation or forestry techniques (White and Jickling 1995). But structural soil conservation interventions required substantial labor investments, resulted in little economic benefit and were "culturally alien" (White and Jickling 1995). According to this research, because farmers saw little economic benefit for such heavy labor investments, they were unlikely to adopt or maintain them. One can imagine the reticence of farmers to adopt such "official altruism" (Erasmus 1952) if it presented no marked improvements to crop output.

However, contemporary farmers present quite a different perspective than those who were targeted by such early introductions. No longer is the introduction of soil conservation structures "culturally alien." In fact, I found that rural residents throughout the coast widely recognized *koupe tè* (cutting earth— a synonym for contour canals) even more than the term *konsèvasyon sòl* (soil conservation). These structures were recognized by men and women, adults and children, young and old. As I spent more and more time talking to farmers and rural residents of all ages, it was apparent that knowledge of *koupe tè* was not knowledge held only by a specialized group of individuals. Because agriculture was woven into the fabric of rural life, so too was the knowledge of contour canals. Not only are the interventions no longer foreign, rural residents did not report a reticence of adoption based on economic output. Rather, they presented alternate logics for not adopting soil conservation interventions. Similar to the work group presented above, farmers in Damòn do not discuss the limited economic benefits of contour

canals. Rather, they explain that one does not do soil conservation alone: it is something done only by NGOs, by projects. After more than sixty years of continual implementation, soil conservation has become bound to projects in such a way that contour canals have become 'unadoptable' to the farmers of Southern Haiti.

When I was out with the agronomist Jude replanting tree seedlings in preparation for the UN evaluation, we rested on one of the bunds next to the new seedings and chatted with a farmer who was leading his two cattle to pasture. He chatted with us about the problems of animals eating the seedlings: it was not the owner of the land who was leading his animals to this area (he lived in another country). It was others who would come by and tie up their animals. After talking a bit about the problems of managing livestock, I asked him if people in the area were happy about soil conservation. He said "yes, but if they really liked it, they'd leave the trees!"(author notes, 8/6/12). I then asked if others practiced soil conservation. He responded, "no, they don't. There is no project here for that." Jude asked him if it had to do with getting money. The man said yes.

His responses, like those of Kristofè's group at the beginning of the chapter, started to indicate that there were more widely held beliefs about the way that projects and contour canals were related. To better understand if such sentiments were isolated incidents or more widely held beliefs I used a semi-structured set of interviews that focused on three regions of Damòn: Ti Damòn, Gran Damòn, and Tisit. I wanted to better understand how rural residents understood soil conservation and projects and if there was any relationship between the two. Most of my afternoons during the fall of 2012 were spent in the conversations that unfolded from the interviews. Sitting under mango trees, in backyards, and in houses, I made my way through the neighborhoods to learn about these issues from men and women, younger and older residents.

First, and perhaps most importantly, I asked if *koupe tè* (cutting the earth) could be done by oneself (*pou kont ou).* Of the 81 responses to this question, 72 responded in the negative. For almost all respondents then, building contour canals was not a solitary activity. Given that much of agricultural work was done in groups, this was not particularly surprising. However, many of the interviewees (42.8%, or 33 of 77) responded that it was not done by oneself because it was done by *pwoje.* It was not simply a group activity, it was a project based activity. Such evidence is an explicit change from the early aid research on contour canals. The logics of non-adoption reported by Murray (1977, 1978), Erasmus (1952), Shannon et al. (2003), White (1992) and others maintained that among other causes, soil conservation was most often not adopted because it was not seen as economically un-profitable. Supposedly, the short term returns required by farmers were not facilitated by the contour canals.[60] But contemporary residents discussed contour canals in a different light. There seemed to be a division of labor that had been fostered such that projects were the sole source of contour canals in the countryside.

As the farmer explained to Jude and me, this preference has much to do with particular types of payment for labor. During the interviews that fall, wage labor was often conflated with the idea of soil conservation projects. In Gran Damòn, when I asked about *koupe tè*, one gentleman told me "yes, that's what we would like, we would like to receive that to be able to put our children in school" (author interview 11/28/12). When I asked if many people participate in soil conservation, another interlocutor in lower Damòn said:

> Only when groups come they might 'dig', but they do not do it directly. When projects come, they have people dig. The people do it, and therefore benefit with a bit of money.

[60] It is unclear from these studies if farmers themselves cited such economic shortcomings, or if in large this was inferred by researchers.

> *Se le gwoup la vini, yo gen dwa fè koupe, men se pa yo menm ki fel direkteman. Lè yon pwoje vini, yo fè moun koupe. Yo fè l, moun gen dwa benefisye yon ti monè*
> (transcribed interview, 6/4/2013)

Farmers' depictions of how soil conservation is implemented echoes the way in which funding has directed soil conservation. As outlined in Chapter 2, much of conservation structures' funding has come through job creation funding (Brown et al. 1995). As a result, contour canals are not constructed without wage labor. In 1995, the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) job creation project targeted a number of different activities including irrigation construction and sanitation (Brown et al. 1995). Additionally, after the 2010 earthquake, the UN distributed some $40 million in cash for work funding for the quick distribution of jobs, which included soil conservation (Ayiti Kale Je 2012). As a result, the wages paid in cash for work settings have occurred side by side with soil conservation construction.

Awareness of contour canals in the countryside has become linked with the understanding that they are bound to financial incentives provided by projects. Theories of reward systems (intrinsic and extrinsic) founded in psychology and economics literature have made their way into development aid circles (for example, Ellerman 2009). As a result, experts in 'behavior change' are in demand for World Bank contracts and USAID interventions. This assertion of the neoliberal *homoeconomicus* (Foucault 2008) assumes that the neoliberal subject is already a rational actor, one that applies market-based values in all of their judgements and practices. The very premise of soil conservation adoption is founded on such incentive structures attached to project labor. That is, it is assumed that if farmers do not voluntarily adopt contour canals, they will do so if given the appropriate rewards to restructure their behaviors. But instead of changes in the actions of individuals, we start to see new norms of living develop.

## *Rural Labor in Haiti*

Illustrative of project based logics is the way in which projects introduce alternative labor arrangements. Group labor in the countryside is well recognized in the anthropological literature and has a long history in Haiti (JM Smith 2001, Trouillot 1990, Metraux 1951, Herskovitz 1952). Labor is undertaken by the various types of groups I describe below, each working in a collective or rotating fashion. Such rotating labor is referred to as "*youn ede lòt"* (one helps another). For each day of work, which may include weeding or planting, the group works a different member's land. As such, no payment is exchanged, but rather the rotation of the labor group ensures that all equally benefit from each others' labor. Many times such groups are rented out by a landowner to take care of large jobs: harvest, planting, or large weeding jobs. Members of the group can also sell their rotation. That is, on the day the work group comes to their land, they can give that rotation to another rural resident in exchange for cash. As prior research has shown, the collective labor of the hillsides is the ubiquitous labor structure by which most, if not all, work is done. Murray (1978) notes that rarely if ever is a solitary individual working on a plot of land. The spirit of such collective labor is embodied in the refrain of various Haitian proverbs: "*Men anpil, chay pa lou"* (With many hands, the burden is not heavy), or *"Yon sèl dwèt pa manje kalalou"* (One finger alone cannot eat stewed okra). Embodied in many of these proverbs of teamwork is a cooperative spirit that pervades agricultural labor (see JM Smith 2001). As Smith points out, we should not overplay a romanticized communalism of Haiti; the 'noble savage' stereotype as well as the economically rational actor trope oversimplify these complex relationships (see Trouillot 1991).

Within the broad category of collective/rotational labor, specific types of groups exist in Haiti. As opposed to the farmers/neighborhood associations that work on 'community development' objectives, these are un-registered groups based around agricultural labor. The *konbit* is perhaps the most widely recognized term for collective labor in the anthropological literature. In the region of research, the term *konbit* was less used, while *gwoupman peyizan* (peasant group), or *rarà* was used more often to describe the large work groups with trumpets, drums, and whistles. *Gwoupman peyizan* work through rotational labor but also perform other roles in the countryside, for example providing the *animasyon* (music and revelry) for funerals. Powered by coffee, *kleren* (alcohol made from distilled sugar cane), and the continual beat of their drums, the group of men play through the night and into the next day until the dead have been buried. These groups are quite large (25 or so), and when working, their drums and horns can be heard echoing throughout the valley.

The smaller *ekip*/*eskwad* were far more common in the Damòn valley— there was but one active *gwoupman*. The *ekip* and *eskwad* worked varying amounts of time, some once a week, some two or three times a week. Both men and women participated in the labor of the *ekip* and *eskwad*. Unlike the raucous *gwoupman*, the men and women that composed the *ekip* and *eskwad* worked without music, bringing with them only their machetes. They would often be accompanied by a woman in charge of preparing food.

Key to understanding contemporary labor arrangements in Damòn is that many groups also sell their labor. This occurred especially during the peanut harvest, but can occur for most any type of agricultural activity. Despite recognition that the peanut harvest led to erosion (the harvest required significant digging on steep slopes) and that it produced very little, if any, economic return for the planter, farmers still planted the peanuts in the hopes of cash. Peanuts are

a cash crop, but required a substantial amount of labor to harvest, and therefore *ekip/eskwad* were employed to help. That particular harvest was not referred to as the *rekòlt* (harvest), but rather the *fouye* (dig), because the peanuts had to be dug out of the ground rather than just collected.

Because the small labor groups of *ekip* and *eskwad* do sell their labor to those outside the group, early anthropological research used this as evidence of how wage labor was not an alien practice to the countryside, but was part and parcel of village life (Murray 1978). Anthropologist Gerald Murray's foundational research for USAID claimed that contrary to the portrayals of countryside labor, these cooperative working groups were already using wage labor. Murray estimated that an *ekip* or *eskwad* "*may spend about half its time working for wages"* [emphasis in original] (1978:6). As such, he cautioned development planners who were looking for "romantic ideals" of countryside labor untainted by cash exchanges. Recognizing that farmers would not adopt environmental interventions of their own accord, and maintaining that wage labor had already permeated the countryside, Murray advocated the use of monetized incentives to introduce farmers to new practices.[61]

But referring to this type of labor as 'wage labor' seems to miss the important details of the agricultural economy. Such a portrayal ignores the way in which wage labor differs from the exchange arrangements of the rotational groups. Indeed, labor is often exchanged for pre-determined amounts of cash. Those amounts are also often based off of the number of individuals that compose the group, though occasionally the pricing is done by quantity of land to be worked. Money does exchange hands, and the labor potential of the group is sold off at the

[61] However, Murray also recognized and cautioned that the simple wages provided by cash-for-work interventions were rarely successful in promoting soil conservation structures, and more than often led to the 'ruins' of structures found on hillsides (Murray 1979).

going rate in the countryside (in Damòn during 2012, the rate for peanut harvests was between 25 and 50 *goud* per day of work). As I describe below, despite the semblance of wage labor, Haitian farmers revealed practices that challenged the characterization of an individualized and market based labor system.

One early summer morning, I accompanied a farmer named Bekèl while he supervised an *eskwad* he hired as they harvested peanuts on his land. I met Bekèl in lower Damòn, and we took a donkey and two sheep to pasture on the way to meet the *eskwad.* There were two men, three women, and a female cook. Bekèl had hired the man with the pick separately (the 5 month peanuts he had planted were more difficult to get out of the ground than the 3 month peanuts, and a pick was needed to loosen the soil). As the group worked, Bekèl and I sat chatting. He explained that the money he will pay does not go to each individual, but is held in common for the group. Not only were these funds seen as collective, but they were also held until December of each year: "the *eskwad* joins together their money and in December buys an animal to kill" (Bekèl, author interview notes, 11/29/12). That animal is then butchered and the meat divided for the celebration of Haitian Independence Day (January 1). Any remaining funds left over are divided among the group members. Again and again, I was told by various members of *ekip/eskwad* that the money received is not touched by the members until December. Economically, these were not immediate returns. Bekèl stated quite clearly that as an *ekip* member harvesting peanuts, you are there "not because you are hungry" (*pa paske ou grangou)*, "but rather because you want to buy an animal to have a part of the meat in December" (author interview notes 11/29/12). As part of a cooperative work group, group members do not receive immediate or individual payment. Rather, the money accrued is placed in a communal account. Not only are the benefits of group labor disbursed at a later date, they are most often *collective,*

*non-cash gains*. When collective labor groups are hired out, the benefits accrued are therefore not 'wages' as such. Rather, the work of the collective stays collective: the income earned is not distributed individually, but belongs to the group as a whole (see JM Smith 2001).

The *eskwad* highlighted an important facet of group labor in the countryside that complicates a purely 'market' vision of wages. Certainly, day or task labor is present in the countryside: farmers hire one another out for day work or particular labor activities. But group-based exchange labor is far more important (Murray 1977) and works in strikingly different ways. In the face of school fees, the high cost of food, and unpredictable events like crops lost due to weather issues, collective labor overlooks immediate hunger or material needs and maintains a perspective based on a collective future. As one farmer put it, work occurs not because of immediate remuneration, but rather through "a goodwill that will help you in the future" (*bon volontè kap ede w devan*). It was explained to me that on the first of January, *soup joumou,* a thick squash based soup, would be eaten all throughout the country. This tradition, I was told, was held because the slaves of Saint Domingue were not permitted to eat soup. Others, including Jennie M. Smith (2001), have documented the importance of meat on that day. The soup became symbolic of the privileges of freedom. Working throughout the year, collective labor groups ensured that meat would be on the table for such a celebration. Jennie M. Smith's account of the *atribisyon* in the Grand-Anse region of Haiti beautifully documents the sentiments of January 1:

> While the colonists had ruled the land, [slaves] had been denied such delicacies. Slaves were not considered to merit the same food that 'humans' ate. But now the formerly enslaved ate and ate and ate, to their hearts' content. "Since that time, it has become impossible for peasants to buy meat all the time. But although, yes, we are poor, we are humans, and we should all be able to eat meat, even if it's only once a year!" (2001:101)

Early critiques of soil conservation argued that it did not produce the immediate monetary benefits that poor farmers needed (see Erasmus (1952) and Murray (1977, 1978)). Glen Smucker (1983), an anthropologist who contracts with USAID and the World Bank, described the countryside by stating that farmers are intensely self interested, tempered only by special ties and obligations, and argues that there is little evidence of any community solidarity in Haiti. Another social analysis done by USAID regarding its agroforestry intervention propagates this claim: "For good historical reasons, Haitian rural society has always been highly individualized. While event-specific cooperation of many kinds occurs in both secular and religious contexts, no enduring corporate groups, managing a common economic resource over time, have emerged as part of indigenous peasant social organization" (Lowenthal 1990:11). I, along with Jennie Smith, argue against this view of the countryside. The work of the *eskwad* and *ekip* is not only an act of teamwork in the field, it is a profound assertion of dignity, independence, and interdependence in the face of constant struggle. Group labor in the fields of Haiti are therefore not only a means to an individual end, but an ongoing practice of collectivism.

## *Project Labor in Haiti*

Haiti's remarkable countryside labor groups have not only been of interest to anthropologists, but were revered as ideal pre-cut community participation units through which to conduct project based development. In the late 1970s, USAID's large development aid programs had often benefited political connections rather than small rural farmers (Girault 1978). In responding to critiques of that work, collective labor groups were seen as a way to harness

'participative' group labor into the goals of development aid (Murray 1979). Such strategies in international aid were not limited to Haiti, but were indicative of larger global trends (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Using these groups both as instruments and targets of development aid became part of the aid community's agro-environmental strategy in Haiti. Debates on the suitability of introducing wages into collective labor groups raged as fears of 'contaminating' local types of labor exchange were voiced by scholars and aid practitioners (Muray 1978). More specifically, scholars and aid practitioners had voiced concern regarding the use of the *konbit* structure for disbursement of aid, as many of these appropriations have disrupted or undermined local cooperative structures and patterns of reciprocation (JM Smith 2001).

As mentioned previously, as only paid work would facilitate soil conservation, cash for work quickly became the ways in which soil conservation was most often implemented. The lineage of cash for work stems from the New Deal policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States, and Keynesian ideals of economic growth through job creation. But in Haiti, the lineage of cash for work is aligned with Duvalierist *woy woy,* short term group labor designed to work as a 'carrot' in tandem with 'stick' of state violence to placate and govern the population (Ayiti Kale Je 2012). In Haiti then, cash for work is historically tied to efforts designed to pacify a rural population, projects that would not address any major issues, but rather give out small doses of 'hush money' to avert a rebellion. In this light, the inclusion of cash for work into soil conservation raises the possibility that the primary aim of such interventions is not environmental conservation.

To understand the way that project labor worked in the contemporary countryside, I went to talk with Madam and Misye Hermès. During a night of torrential rain wrought by Hurricane Sandy, I scuttled across the road to their house. We sat around the doorway in chairs and on a

bench, the clanking of rain hitting tin roofs around us. A number of times throughout my stay I had seen work groups active in the Damòn valley, moving rocks or digging contour canals, and wearing red shirts with political emblems on them. When I asked who was in charge of such work groups, I was led back to this house and to the group of Madam Hermès. She was 'at the head' of many of the small work groups that would clean roads, move rocks, or dig ditches. The reputation of their group throughout town was that they received contestant project support. Madam Hermès worked for the legislative representative in town, and a neighbor once drew close to me and whispered that it is she that does all of the representative's work. Through relationships with government functionaries, the group had received a large number of projects. As we spoke, Madam and Misye Hermès shared some of their project histories. Within those histories they portrayed an intimate bind between both projects and labor.

Like many other groups, the history of Madam Hermès' women's group is a history of projects. After hearing about opportunities offered by DCCH/Caritas (an aid extension of the Catholic church) a group of 15 women met and formed a women's group. Soon, they were incorporated in the DCCH/Caritas credit and lending scheme. While they were legally recognized by the commune in 1999, they did not register with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work until 2010. The group subsequently separated from the credit scheme (DCCH/Caritas demanded a payment of 3.5%, and donors also seemed to have lost interest) but continued in the receipt of projects. Madam Hermès' organization sought legalization for the same reasons as Matye's group described in the previous chapter: to be able to get projects, and because "for them [government and NGOs] to see you too, you should be visible" (Madam Hermès, interview 10/25/12). I asked if receiving projects changed the way that the organization worked. Madam Hermès responded that "when the organization finds a project, then you give out the work, and

people say that it is thanks to the organization that I have a small job, and can pay for school" (Madam Hermès, 10/25/12). While my question wasn't directly answered, it indicated a recurring theme in our conversation. For Madam Hermès and her husband, projects were fundamentally about labor. While the organization had their own 'projects' such as a savings groups and peanut butter and marmalade sales, external projects were labor opportunities. Not only was this how the Hermès understood projects, but also how the rest of the town saw the Hermès: "We don't manage the things that are done in the commune…we send people to work…all day long they come and ask me [for this work]" (Madam Hermès, interview 10/25/12). Madam Hermès' group was a connection point between government and non-governmental projects, and as such, simultaneously became a hub for wage labor. 'Projects' are in many ways intimately bound to a very particular type of labor.

The type of labor that makes its way into the countryside through projects is distinct from the practices of farmers among themselves. Project based wage labor distinguishes itself first by the level of monetary compensation provided. Quite simply, it pays well: 200 *goud* per day (approximately US$4.60). The most common rotation on a labor team lasted for two weeks, and 200 *goud* would be paid for each day worked on the labor team. At the end of the two-week period, each participant would be given, in cash, the wages earned. According to Lobi, who worked for HOEA, the NGOs that were paying for tree planting up the coast were also paying 200 *goud*. Other types of projects outside of agro-environmental work paid similarly: for a beach trash pickup in Lejè, the owner of one of the beachside 'kitchens' told me that the IHC paid 200 *goud* each to 50 people to clean up the beach. Throughout my interviews in the countryside, residents repeated that 200 *goud* is widely known as the appropriate price for project labor.

Soil conservation work was compensated just as the rest of project labor was compensated. This rate, while appropriate for the day labor of a project, was far greater than any price an individual in the countryside could find for individual or task labor. While project based labor was a standard 200 *goud,* the going rate for an individual to hire themselves out to a fellow farmer was about 100 *goud*, according to Lebèl, the President of ATAD. For peanut harvesting, the price was far less, 25 or 50 goud, as Bekèl, Lebèl, and other interview respondents confirmed. In comparison to countryside labor, 200 *goud* is a sizable amount of money, far more than wages for harvesting peanuts, and approximately twice what an individual might receive by working a task for another farmer. This monetary difference may seem insignificant, or at best a quantitative difference in the amount paid. However, such extreme difference in payment ends up contributing to a conceptualization of project labor as different from agricultural labor in the countryside.

Through ongoing interviews regarding soil conservation and labor, it became apparent that in fact the quantitative difference in compensation contributes to a *qualitative* difference in the type of compensation provided by a project. For example, one day, off of the main road of Damòn in Nelson's *lakou*, I asked Nelson and his father to help me understand why I had been finding these attitudes towards soil conservation. Both Nelson and his father were active in ATAD, and had seen many soil conservation projects come and go. Nelson's father spoke about how even though people saw soil conservation as important, they still wanted to *benefisye* (benefit): "*Depi konsèvasyon sòl, yo konnen lajan"* (When soil conservation is mentioned, people know that money is coming) (author interview notes, 10/9/12). He continued: "people won't form groups to do this work"(author interview notes 10/9/12). Despite the proliferation of group labor in the countryside, and the supposed benefits of soil conservation, it was not taken

up by the collective labor groups. Speaking with Franswa's daughter and son-in-law, I asked if it would be possible for a landowner (given that land owner had sufficient money) to pay for soil conservation. She responded: "*Se pa yon met pou peye. Se pa sa*"(It is not a landowner who pays. It is not that.)(author interview notes, 10/16/12).

Whereas group labor is most often structured around collective participation and delayed benefit, project labor is structured around individualism and immediacy. Project based labor groups, while they appear to work as a collective 'team', receive individual benefits immediately following their work. Certainly, much of project-based labor is facilitated by organizations: community or neighborhood associations, women's groups and the like act as conduits for project labor. But the labor itself is divided into 200 *goud* 'rotations' given to individuals. The group that works together is not compensated as a group, as in the most common labor arrangements in Haiti. Implicit in project labor is the epistemological assumption that the unit of labor for large projects is the individual. Such an individualization rides alongside insertion of foreign capital. With foreign capital comes the idea of an industrialized workday, one that regulates both time and space. While there have been various fluctuations and contestations of the minimum wage (Schuller 2008), 200 *goud* was the rate in 2012, and seems to be a significant referent in its use as a project wage. Formal labor arrangements in Haiti, especially those based on free trade agreements have long taken advantage of an impoverished Haiti to pay low wages for assembly and textile sectors (Farmer 1994). The type of time that comes into the countryside of Haiti with project capital is a time broken down into 'wages' and regularized by international labor accords between private industry and government regulatory bodies. It does not recognize agreements and practices of the countryside, practices that may not always be simply divisible into individuals and hours.

Insertions of wage labor are impositions of a particular ontology of work. While wage labor does exist in the countryside, it is done primarily through the work of individuals and not groups. But even for individual, it would be a distortion to understand rural labor exchanges simply as wage labor: "Agrarian wage labor should be studied as one transaction within a system of agrarian labor transactions, and not simply as an exchange of labor for cash"(Pierre 2009:151). Task or day labor might be exchanged for other types of labor as well, and sellers of labor might also be buyers of labor, challenging the dyadic 'patron-client' model of rural labor (Pierre 2009). While labor is sold within the countryside by individuals in need of cash, group labor has been a source of collective savings through agricultural work. Like a wolf in sheep's clothing, project group labor appears to conform to the norms of the countryside, but in fact works to monetize those relationships.

For example, the aid project "*Pwoje Sove Tè"* (Project Save the Land) worked in the South from 1987 to 1991, focusing quite explicitly on the goals of conservation and development: to increase income while reducing degradation. The project was to focus on increasing the production of high value crops, reforestation, and soil conservation. While the final project report portrays the successful interventions of the project, Howard (1997) found other realities entwined in the project that inserted themselves into the logics of *youn ede lòt* (one helps another) labor: "The project sought to un-tangle these reciprocal arrangements and replace them with formal markets that could rationally mediate relationships with currency" (Howard 1997:10). The complex social relationships built on rotating groups unregistered with the state were illegible to development and state actors (Scott 1998). Cash relationships in the countryside

made these relationships far more clear to the state by monetizing relationships between individuals.[62]

Rather than work as a collective force, "the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another" (Marx 2012[1844]). In the labor of conservation, the knowledge of the land is no longer that of the farmer, but held by an agronomist leading a technical intervention. The once knowledgeable farmer becomes an employee contracted not by his fellow farmer, but of an external entity. Marx sees this turn to wage labor as not voluntary, but coerced. His depiction finds traction with those who have analyzed the dynamics of soil conservation in other regions, describing soil conservation as a history of coercion and control (Pretty and Shah 1997). In the rural regions of Haiti, the need for cash is such that the offer of simple wage labor is quite nearly 'forced' labor, as Marx would have us see it. Labor as an activity therefore does not belong to the worker, it becomes "an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him. Here we have *self-estrangement*, as previously we had the estrangement of the *thing*" (Marx 2012[1844]). Farmers, working together in solidarity, work for the group while simultaneously working for themselves. But in the receipt of wages, the farmer becomes merely a worker, void of adequate technical knowledge, a recipient not of the benefit of their own work, but instead a recipient of 'aid'. The once knowledgeable farmer becomes instead, a 'beneficiary'.

In the production of soil conservation projects, the 'successful' intervention is as much a product as the canals. This product is then used by organizations and funders to attract other

[62] Like similar interventions, once the cash flow stopped, and the project ended, many of the technical interventions of PST were lost. According to the Howard (1997), it was USAID's requirements for empirical success that drove NGOs to concentrate on measurable technical improvements rather than improving quality of life.

projects. The laborers of contour canal projects may receive a daily wage, but as many rural residents understood (as outlined in Chapter 3), the real benefits of projects are already 'eaten'. This type of labor constitutes a fundamentally separate from collective agricultural work in Haiti. So intimately has this been melded with soil conservation that a new norm has developed: in the countryside, it is well known that contour canals are simply not done without projects.

## *Conclusion*

To dismiss the way that farmers talk about the bond between projects and soil conservation is to see a complex world of values and beliefs simplify into questions of economic rational. Farmers in the hills of the South discuss a set of norms that govern contour canals. Such norms constrain the possibility for thought. For example, the cooperative work groups of Haiti are certainly physically able to implement a task such as contour canals. In addition to physical ability, with knowledge of implementation well spread throughout the countryside, they also have access to the 'technical' knowledge required. There is a widespread appreciation of the environmental value of contour canals, and lament over the state of erosion in the hillsides. But it was the existing norms that delineated who would and could implement and build contour canals.

While soil conservation projects have intended to alter the actions of farmers, they have succeeded instead in fostering and altering relationships in rural Haiti. Originally, soil conservation seems to be an intervention of discipline as defined by Foucault (2003). Disciplinary power's primary actor is the expert, one who seeks to control through technologies

of power. By working through particular institutions in society, the aim is to alter the actions of individuals. Trainings are the primary 'hinge' to such forms of power, constituting the form through which discipline attempts to alter the actions of individuals (Nealon 2008). In the case of soil conservation, such attempts are embodied by the agronomists, working to observe and regulate the farmers. As presented in Chapter 2, soil erosion has long been defined in terms of the deficiency of the farmer. Given this problematization, the expert development agencies and the state work to train the farmers to alter their actions. But farmers do not adopt these practices as hoped.

While development planners have aspired to control soil degradation through discipline, the insertion of wage labor and particular logics of the project have constituted a far more intense and diffuse mode of power. Regardless of the intent of any particular funding stream, a collective understanding of how one engages with contour canals has arisen in the countryside. Such a collective understanding might be thought of as composing a set of *norms of participation*. While espousing environmental and agricultural goals, the form taken by environmental interventions fosters the development of logics throughout the countryside, logics that are socially comprised and socially spread. That is, such norms of participation are not brought about solely through contact with soil conservation (by hosting contour canals on one's land or participation in a labor group). Rather, as my interviews demonstrate, understandings of engagement with contour canals permeates the hillsides even if individuals have not come into direct contact with the intervention itself. These established norms spread ahead of, around, and through the wage labor of contour canals.

As projects spread, they take with them properties that very slowly start to integrate into the fabrics of everyday life: grassroots organizations once independent of state oversight now

seek out their own registration with the state, rural residents enter employment as 'technicians' or 'field agents', individuals become defined as 'beneficiaries' or 'recipients', and a division of labor between what a project does and what farmers do becomes widely accepted as normative. The organization of space, time, and labor into a particular set of logics constitutes a burgeoning expansion of subject positions. New possibilities of defining relations between individuals arise and occur in relation to the project.

If the aim of discipline is the control of actions, the aim of biopower is to foster 'auto-control'. As such, rather than the expert doing the training, the form of governmentality uses individuals as both the targets and the technologies of power. Governmentality then, is this deep permeation of power that works through self-governing in relation to norms. In the case of the Haitian countryside, while disciplinary controls have missed their mark, the aid apparatus, in all of its administrative and bureaucratic insistences, forms a facet of unintended governmentality. Norms of building contour canals arise through a type of project 'awareness' and by slowly orienting the countryside year after year to the development project, avenues for further projects are paved. The Haitian countryside can be thought of in the past twenty years as becoming increasingly 'projectified', the result of which are new norms and relationships constituting a set of project based subjectivities.

Agrawal's work on environmentality explores the way that socially situated actors come to care for, act, and think of their actions in relation to the environment. In the case he presents, forest administrators found it difficult to regulate state forests via vigilance and punishment, but through more participatory methods, fostered an environmental concern in the population. The more veiled governing strategies served to inculcate an environmental concern, forming subjects who were driven to protect the forests they previously set fire to.

The case of contour canals in Haiti, however, raises another possibility that complicates ideas of environmental interventions and subject formation. Rather than foster a discipline of conservation, project based soil conservation is far more effective at fostering subjects concerned with the project itself. Farmers share a set of rules with which to engage contour canals. Rather than regulate their actions according to a set of environmental principles, rural residents come to understand the logics of projects. As opposed to Agrawal's (2005) example, there is no countryside of individuals successfully following through with the will of planners. Instead, there is a separate set of logics constituted by and practiced in the project that establishes 'norms of participation' in the countryside.

The assemblages of projects— their documents, bureaucracies, and experts— come to intersect with the ideologies and infrastructures of contour canals. The form of wage labor satisfies the construction of canals, and permits the financial visibility of relationships. Project documents provide continuity for the canals, and the canals provide evidence for the continuity of reports and projects. This research on the intersections of project forms and forms of soil provides not only a glimpse into the ongoing efforts of soil conservation in Haiti, but also into broader logics and structures of aid.

# CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion: Slipping Aid, Slipping Soil

This dissertation began with Jan Franswa's observations about two interconnected flows: the flow of aid, and the flow of soil. As we sat in his *lakou*, he referenced the canals that a project had recently built on his land. Noticing the descending soil, he thought about how little the small canals did in the face of the constant erosion. The soil was already accumulating in the small ditches— the 'cut earth'— only months after they were dug. Jan Franswa made an analogy to how this flow of soil was similar to the flows of agricultural aid. In the economic and political context of the countryside, with larger macroeconomic policies that put farmers at a disadvantage, small aid projects could do very little. Unfortunately, the ineffectiveness of these projects was not a recent phenomenon. The startling reality of Jan Franswa's comments is that for as long as soil degradation has been written about in Haiti, contour canals have been dug into the hillsides.

While Jan Franswa's comments about the flows of soil and its connection to aid were made in analogy, this research has shown that drifting soil, ineffective canals, and failing aid have very real links to one another. The histories of contour canals are intimately tied to framings of degradation, histories of aid, and the political economy of rural Haiti. This research did not originally set out to examine soil conservation. However, by examining Haiti's soils, one had to take into account inequalities and processes of accumulation and dispossession. By examining the soil conservation structures that were built into those soils one had to examine the ideas and projects that had brought them there. And by examining soil conservation projects, one

was examining how aid forms had constructed success out of what seemed to be a series of failures.

This dissertation works to untangle these failures: how is it that since 1950s, contour canals have continually be implemented in the countryside? How have wave after wave of ineffective interventions affected the countryside? This dissertation makes a number of contributions to conceptualizing aid and the environment in Haiti that I will discuss in this chapter. First, this research reframes the discussion of the environment and environmental degradation in Haiti. Dominated by aid funding, few voices other than those sponsored by USAID or UN agencies contribute to understanding human-environment relations in Haiti. Second, this research analyzes the development project and posits the project form as a primary problematic in development aid. Not only does the project form affect aid interventions, it has deep impact in altering the countryside affecting organizations, space, time, and labor. Finally, this research contributes to understanding the inequalities inherent in the project. Not only does the project propagate inequalities through its selectivity, the very production of projects and of project success is based on benefiting the implementing institution over the 'beneficiaries'.

In addition to outlining these contributions, I reflect on the potential applications of this research to questions of NGO 'accountability'. A growing discourse in Haiti calls for the accountability of NGOs, or the 'reigning in' of NGOs. I highlight the way that movements for accountability may actually further the disenfranchisement of rural populations. Finally, I highlight the moments in which aid projects have been protested or rejected. Despite what seems like a deeply entrenched set of processes and assumptions, there are ways in which rural residents have successfully worked against the form of the project.

## *A Counter-Narrative of Degradation*

The environmental degradation in Haiti is a type of slow violence. Slow violence is "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all"(Nixon 2011: 2). Slow violence asks us to think not about the specific events that decry violence, such as mass killings, or lacerations from a military regime. Slow violence asks us to alter the temporal scale we use to consider violence. In doing so, we can consider events that are neither "spectacular nor instantaneous," but are rather incremental. This allows us to consider how violence has repercussions that play out along various temporal scales. While structural violence has been invoked in acknowledging the condition of Haiti's poor among larger power structures (Farmer 2004), slow violence specifically thinks about what can be publicly ignored when timelines grow exceedingly long.

In Chapter Two, I laid out the ways in which the rise of population studies and neo-Malthusianism contributed to the depictions of Haiti's environmental problems. In fact, one of the most prolific anthropologists writing on the subject of Haiti's environment was funded by USAID population research (see Murray 1977). Throughout the scholarship on Haiti's environment, two things are noticeably present throughout the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century. The first is the constant mention of population as a consideration of environmental degradation. While focused on more heavily by some authors than others, it is almost always included. These claims assert a causal relationship where no causal evidence occurs: land degradation can occur

whether or not there is population growth (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987). Degradation in Haiti, as across the globe, is a question of the relations of accumulation and dispossession. The second noticeable presence within the literature on environmental degradation in Haiti over the past forty years is the unwavering presence of USAID funding. In writing against neo-Malthusian arguments of the environment, one is invariably writing against the strategic imposition of USAID funding as it relates to their project goals. Dissenting voices exist, but are far more difficult to find.

The application of political ecology to refute assertions of population growth and degradation is not a novel argument. But its application to environmental degradation in Haiti has been dampened by the dominance of population arguments. After years of being dominated by the voices of anthropologists and other social scientists funded in one way or another by aid organizations (UNONE as well), scholarship is needed that breaks out of a pragmatic framing based at formulating further solutions. Paravissini-Gebert (2011) makes excellent use of the texts of Moreau de Saint-Méry in detailing early accounts of degradation. Jean Francois Mouhot (2013) has made a more recent and focused historical intervention in critically analyzing literature on Haiti and deforestation. He argues for an analysis that is historically grounded, rather than playing into assumptions about when and how environmental degradation occurred.

This research contributes to Haitian studies and environmental studies in Haiti by providing ethnographic data and accounts of the environment that critically examine not only assumptions of the environment but also the role of aid in the production of that environment. Anthropology in Haiti has not seen a new wave of environmental research since this research trajectory was started in the 1970s. The research agenda has been interested not in fundamentally questioning the structures and functions of aid, but by being complicit with them. The present

work establishes that not only are there alternative research ventures, but that the pervasiveness of years of aid means that an ethnographically grounded understanding of the environment in Haiti must include an acknowledgement of development aid's impacts, both material and conceptual.

## *Projectification*

Soil degradation in Haiti has continued not only because of the accumulation and dispossession of natural resources, but in part because of the continuous replication of ineffective interventions. Since the 1950s, contour canals and other ineffective interventions have been propagated throughout the hillsides of Haiti. As Jude and one of his colleagues noted, agronomists employed by NGOs in the region are second-guessing the contour canals. Once filled with water, the canals themselves might become sources of degradation rather than conservation. While an instructive case on the potential blunders of aid, the degrading potential of conservation structures is not a novel observation (see Sauer 1934 in Trimble 1985). Very early on in the sweeping implementation of soil conservation, Sauer observed that in part it was the extensive but unmaintained terraces throughout the United States that were crumbling and producing the soil degradation they were meant to contain. From early on, the infrastructures of conservation are made to include some actors, and dismiss others (Larkin 2012). Stable soil comes to speak for the entire terraces while moving soils are largely left invisible. In Haiti, despite repetitive aid interventions, soils have continued to erode into the ocean. Again and again, research on these structures concludes that they have not been adopted (see White 1992). But somehow canals are continually built.

Problem definitions of environmental degradation that hinged on farmers practices and population growth made it possible for interventions that devalued farmers' knowledge to become the ideal solutions. As soil erosion became a global concern, the interventions developed in the United States spread around the globe with a modernist vision of regulating and ordering the environment. Farmers were portrayed as uneducated and unaware of their own detrimental practices (Pretty and Shah 1997). But while particular problematizations bring soil conservation to Haiti, it is the project form and assessment that kept them going.

This dissertation demonstrates that it is the form of project evaluation that permits the propagation of otherwise 'ineffective' interventions. Forms of measurement and audit assess the project not according to what might be the most relevant set of measurements (Strathern 2000, Power 1997, Shore and Wright 2000). Rather, evaluations are made that conform to particular time frames and spaces. Evaluators encode success on documents, which come to represent the impact of the project. Shifting soils remain invisible to measurement, while small countable saplings come to represent success. So interested are project evaluators in finding success, that failures are stepped around (in the case of crumbling walls), and living saplings are remembered and encoded while the dead saplings (as in the case of Jude's audit in Chapter Four) are forgotten or ignored. These processes of measurement do not neutrally convey information but actively transform and construct success (Callon 1986, Latour 2005).

In addition to the measurement and evaluation of the project, the project form determines and guides planning. The possibility of introducing longer-form interventions is constrained by forms of financing aid and the ways in which that financing will be held accountable. While Festèl may be interested in incorporating long term and broad reforms to combat soil erosion and increase agricultural productivity, a dependence on one-year projects constrains his ability to

introduce alternative forms of soil conservation. Additionally, in designing projects, organizations and agronomists are forced to consider the ways that their work will be accounted for. Because future projects depend on the successful implementation of the current project, there are sets of constraints that direct project designers towards what will be measured. Organizations may not consider the owners of the land, the conditions of the earth, and the state of degradation. Instead, they may focus far more intently on thinking about the bodies and mobility of potential project evaluators.

To describe those who work at various levels of aid as 'unaware' would be incorrect and quite contrary to the thoughtful reflections that I heard from agronomists. Jude lamented that he had to work in short time frames, wishing he could support farmers in a more long-term fashion. Festèl and Leonel both had misgivings about contour canals, seeing it as a rampant intervention that could potentially cause problems. Yet despite understanding many of the existing problems, many were compelled to proceed in compliance. Jude had strategically placed seedlings not according to principles of soil conservation, but according to where they might be 'evaluated'. Even with realization of the problems that project constraints imposed, some were not in a position to challenge the funding system. There is an increasing allegiance to the form of the project despite an awareness of its limitations. But by dominating the form of development design and implementation, the project makes alternative forms of implementation and measurement extremely difficult. This research argues that while there may be ways to work around project requirements (see the final section of this chapter), the receipt of project-based aid itself enrolls the organization or individual into the assemblage of the project. In doing so, this highly financialized and bureaucratized form of aid imposes restrictions, forces particular perspectives of time and space and begins to alter those organizations and individuals.

In addition to arguing that there is a projectification of development aid that affects the structures and processes of that aid I also demonstrated the projectification of the Haitian countryside. I refer to the way in which the form of the project has come to affect life more profoundly. Rural organizations that may have worked through member dues and as a part of the Haitian 'grassroots' are increasingly drawn to the resources of the project in a resource scarce countryside. As they do so, questions are raised as to how the process of 'legalization', and continuing bureaucratic impositions of aid alter these organizations. Because of the demands of the project and the new types of 'work' that organizations must engage in through the exchange and production of documents, organizations practice a different type of work. Therefore, in looking to change the pathways and processes of aid, it may not be enough to find an 'ideal organization' to fund. Rather, the funding requirements, even for short-term projects, may require organizations to behave in new and different ways (see Schuller 2012a for discussions of funding and participation in NGOs).

Understanding the ways in which development projects have permeated the countryside leads to the acknowledgement of the intense and diffuse ways in which governance works. Previous discussions of governmentality and the environment (environmentality) have hinged on the successful ways in which environmental governance achieves a reorientation of subjectivities (Agrawal 2005). But within the context of soil conservation and development, the attempt is made not to foster new subject positions, but simply alter farmers' actions. As these attempts are made again and again through the insertion of projects, there is no further adherence to 'environmentalism', but rather a diffuse and permeating norm and awareness of the projects. In slowly defining divisions of labor, influencing conceptualizations of space and fostering the subject position of the 'beneficiary', soil conservation projects succeed in a governmentality of

the project. By reorienting the countryside (slightly in some ways, drastically in others) new subject positions are fostered.

Group labor in the countryside has long been the domain of cooperation, exchange, and quite often non-monetary compensation. Yet with cash-for-work style project based labor propagated by contour canal projects, these relationships are monetized and individualized. Hierarchies are developed in which those who are of higher rank in a community association have a better chance of 'supervising' and may get increased salaries. Those who are associated with organizations or who live closer to the space of implementation have a better chance at receiving project benefits. The organizations themselves, eager to get resources, seek and become vehicles for development projects. While cooperative work groups and lending groups still remain in the countryside, gradually people and things are drawn in more and more to the rhyme and reason of the project. So powerful is this grouping of documents, individuals, and rationales, that through its many years of facilitating soil conservation, the project has become ontologically bound to contour canals: there will be no contour canal without the project.

Development is mired in particular patterns of thought, and the more that specific assemblages enter into the countryside, the more that those assemblages come to constitute the ways that development can be imagined. Projects, as they are brought in from NGOs and governments, constitute reinforcements of particular structures of aid. As the countryside becomes increasingly 'projectified', these internal logics come to constrain the possibility for thought. Development becomes prescribed not only because of the ways that funding mandates the format of projects, but because the constant insertion of these projects creates a new set of actors dependent on these structures and invested in their propagation. Not only are farmers, agronomists, and aid workers the targets of this diffuse form of power, they are also the means

and the purveyors. Like the agronomists who criticize the model of the project, it becomes ever more difficult to resist such impositions.

Investigations and writings on the project are not new (see Sedra 2003, Sampson 1996, Latour 1996). The project is not only an assemblage that translates (Sampson 1996) or divides larger interventions into bite size pieces (Sedra 2003). This research highlights the way that the project becomes a new orientation in the countryside and in development. By this I do not mean that the form of the project is new. Rather, I argue that the extensive exposure to project based development and the particular set of logics with which the project operates have created new sets of norms and practices in the countryside. Some of those practices, such as the construction of contour canals, have been so enmeshed with project logics that the two are all but inseparable.

If this is the case in Haiti with soil conservation, what might occur in other areas? By thinking about the project as a global assemblage, we entertain the possibility that the heterogeneous grouping of actors in Haiti is but one localization of the project form. Given the global nature of this assemblage, and its prevalence in the field of development, the project is localized in different domains with similar exigencies of funding, measurement, and design. Given the dominance of the project in international aid, there are clear connections across funding institutions. However, the project is also prevalent in engineering, business, and science. What are the varieties of ways that the project form is called upon? The focus on the project and projectification serves as a call for further research about how projects are instantiated and how they affect norms and subjectivities.

## *The Injustice of the Project*

Throughout the many iterations of projects in the countryside, farmers have developed an understanding of the ways that they can expect project based aid to be disbursed. This research demonstrates that for the rural residents of Southern Haiti, projects are selective, propagating existing inequalities. At the same time, the 'beneficiaries' are not the group who most benefits from projects. The very production of the project relies on 'beneficiaries' as objects of measurement and assessment. Without beneficiary organizations or individuals, the NGOs that produce projects could not continue in the production of success, which is necessary to acquire and disperse even more projects.

The high demand for projects exits because of the dearth of basic services in the Haitian countryside. The context in which rural residents asked me if I had any projects was a context of need. It was a context of historical resource extraction and consistent negligence by the state to provide services to the area and to the people described disparagingly as *andeyò* (outside). Within this context of inequality and basic need, projects select small populations to receive benefits.

Far from egalitarian, projects are particularly selective, funding those who are well connected through 'their people' (*moun pa*). At the same time, farmers expressed frustration at the spatial selection of projects: projects insist upon particular delineations of space for resource disbursal. For a selection of beneficiaries, this not only means that there are geographic delineations of project beneficiaries, but that often those delineations neglect the lands more difficult to access. According to many rural residents, the scarce few resources that come through projects are far more available closer to town than out in the hillsides. Such spatial delineations continue to distribute resources in a fundamentally unequal way. Even in the process of

acquiring projects, gaps begin to open between those who have a level of literacy necessary to negotiate processes of registration and legalization. The differences between rural and urban spaces are highlighted by the movement of documents and SUVs. Unfortunately, the ease with which SUVs travel up and down the coast is not the ease with which project benefits flow. Rather, the descriptions of the flows of aid through projects are based on 'touching' and 'eating'. The aid intermediaries (Schuller 2012b) are not often seen as facilitating the touching or making of money. Rather, they are seen as eating money. Eating money implies a halt in the flow of aid, a consumption in which the *gwo misye* (big men) eat at the expense of the poor. The very flow of aid through projects heightens existing inequalities. Even those flows are interrupted by those who 'eat' the funds in the 'big offices' in town.

The production of projects occurs on in an unequal and coercive context. The title of 'beneficiary' so often given to those who receive projects should be challenged not only by the above descriptions of where the money goes, but also by the very process of project production. The context of need in the Haitian countryside disposes individuals and organizations to the project. And indeed, in the case of soil conservation projects, they may receive a day's wages (potentially over the course of a number of weeks) or may even receive new contour canals on their land. However, we might challenge the term 'beneficiary' by examining what is produced by a project. Certainly a project in this case seems to produce wage labor and canals. But it also produces success. Given the questionable benefit of contour canals, and the small quantities of wage labor, project 'success' may be one of the most important productions of the project. The political economy of the project not only aligns with existing inequalities, but also creates new types of markets for exploitation.

Without success, NGOs or contracting organizations may not receive the final 10% of their budget allocation. Further on, without being able to produce a measureable level of success, organizations may not be able to acquire additional projects. In this light, rural *asosyasyon* and individuals, receiving relatively little in return, provide their names, labor, and time to the production of project success. In doing so, a new type of resource is extracted from the hillsides. It is a resource valuable only in its bureaucratic representation, produced via the evaluation and audit. It is the ability to be a project beneficiary. NGOs stand much to gain from project continuity. But as the history of contour canals demonstrates, those in rural Haiti see little benefit.

## *Crisis of Accountability*

The injustice of development aid in Haiti has been well reported, and as a result, there are movements to curb the tide of a development industry in Haiti run amok. I have received emails recently from both scholars and activists regarding my research, identifying with a shared sense of 'reigning' in the NGOs through accountability. These movements seek to establish some larger system of accountability, pair the NGOs with government ministries and otherwise attempt to 'see' more of their activity in order to guarantee that their funding is being appropriately used. Yet within this movement to establish regulations and reporting structures, reports continually flow away from rural farmers (or other 'beneficiaries') and towards donors and the 'technical experts' who plan development interventions. True to form for trends of accountability, these movements would increase the power of those who hold the purse strings, further disempowering farmers and agronomists.

This research demonstrates that these types of accountability are not the solution to problems of NGOs gone wild, but rather are a source of a new set of problematics. In fact, I would position this research as writing *against* accountability. Accountability has its roots, both verbally and historically, in the 'account', the financial sector. Perhaps better said by Shore and Wright (2000), I write against these financially derived models of audit that "impel subjects actively to contribute to authoritarian and coercive processes of accounting" (2000:571).

In Chapter Five, I portrayed a problematic of the audit. In development aid, this audit takes place under the guise of mid-term evaluations, project closures, or donor visits. In each of these cases, it is constituted by a performance (or ritual) of verification, in which the *audit*ory and the visual are domains in which verification is achieved. But within these evaluations, I noted how the 'successful' seedling (or wall) comes to speak for all saplings (or walls), and how notes of failure are dismissed. These evaluations propagate a 'primacy of the successful'. Because the results of the project are to be visible and measurable, they must also take into account the bodies and mobility of the auditor. Designing and measuring projects around these factors compels NGOs and farmers associations to alter the way in which they execute projects. It is not necessarily the desire of agronomists to execute projects in a particular way. They may very well wish to work otherwise.

## *Rejecting the Project*

Implicit within the permeation of the project lies important possibilities for resistance of development in its particular form. This research is in fact oriented around a very specific type of 'counter conduct' that farmers practice when engaging with soil conservation projects. Rather

than continue willingly to maintain and adopt contour canals as their own practices, farmers have eschewed such practices for years. While largely speaking positively of them, farmers have not adopted these canals as long as they have been in Haiti. Different causes for such rejection have been posited over the years, largely relating to the lack of economic benefit. The present research posits that there are new logics at hand, such that there is a shared norm of how to engage with projects, and that the continuity of contour canals is not one of them. In all, farmers historically have been quite simply, '*counter-canal*'.

While but a short section of this dissertation research, the resistance to the IHC imposition of the TIC program in Potòn was a significant moment in which various individuals acted out against development projects. Protests were staged in Potòn, and rocks were thrown at the office. People were upset about the way that project money was being spent, and they acted out on it. It is beyond the scope of this research to examine such a case in detail (and certainly the many political affiliations and mobilizations at play). But as such actions came to the knowledge of donors, funding was pulled away. Far more problematic is that rather than restructuring the way that resources were allocated, the funding was moved elsewhere.

In addition to the ways in which projects have been resisted, this research points out a possibility, however difficult, of reversing the power of projects. As a network, projects must have the cooperation of the actors enrolled. In order to continue with its tenuous assertions of relationships, the various actors must play their roles. In the case of the TIP project, when actors acted outside of the roles delineated, the project started to unravel. Investigating projects as assemblages and networks allows us to see how important each actor is in the life of the project. For example, without technical assertions coming from research documents, a course of action cannot be legitimized. Without evaluations and reports, the project cannot be a success. But

additionally, without soils and farmers, the project cannot function. Countryside organizations are needed to subcontract projects, and receive their benefits. NGOs need the cooperation of these groups in order to 'successfully' complete projects and receive continued funding. If organizations and individual Haitians refuse to comply with the demands of the project, the system writ large would begin to unravel. As always, there is a persistent potential for change.

In examining the violence of environmental degradation in Haiti, we must simultaneously consider the injustice of development aid. This is not an ethnography of a new phenomenon. Contour canals were implemented in Haiti soon after the first engagement with aid in the 1950s and have continued since. The legacies of these interventions can be seen like scratches across the sides of hills, the 'ruins' of aid interventions past. As soil trickles down hillsides, so too do millions of dollars of soil conservation funding. The crumbled canals are material remnants of aid, and reminders that the violence of environmental degradation in Haiti continues under the watchful eye of aid projects.

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# Appendices

## *Appendix 1: Map of Haiti*



*Appendix 2: Organizational Registration Instructions*



Les motifs et procédures d'exclusion et les sanctions disciplinaires contre les membres ;

La fréquence, minimum des réunions ordinaires et extraordinaires de l'assemblée générale et le mode de convocation ;

La forme de paiement des cotisations, leur montant, le mode de perception ;

La fréquence de présentation du rapport financier à l'Assemblée générale ;

La manière de gérer les conflits intérieurs ;

La dissolution volontaire de l'association et les modalités de liquidation.

2. RENOUVELLEMENT

Au moment du renouvellement de l'attestation, Responsable chargé d'assurer le suivi du dossier it soumettre les pièces suivantes à la Direction du avail :

a) Une lettre de demande de renouvellement (3 originales) ;

b) L'Original de l'ancienne attestation ;

c) Un bilan d'activités (chiffré et détaillé) le coût des activités et provenance de fonds ;

d) Le procès-verbal d'élection de l'actuel comité Directeur accompagné des copies de NIF et des Certificats de bonne vie et mœurs des membres du nouveau comité directeur.

e) Les frais d'impression de l'attestation (cas 250.00).

3. FEDERATION / CONFEDERATION

1 plus des pièces mentionnées au point relatif aux sociations, il faut pour enregistrer :

- Une fédération d'association :
  5 Associations reconnues

- Une confédération d'association :
  3 Fédérations reconnues ou 15 associations reconnues.

LETRANGER

Les Associations oeuvrant hors du territoire national et qui désirent installer un bureau en Haïti soumettront un dossier qui comportera :

- 2 Exemplaires des statuts de l'acte constitutif et du procès-verbal dûment légalisés par le Consulat Haïtien du pays où évolue l'association ;

- La traduction du dossier, le cas échéant, dans l'une des langues officielles d'Haïti ;

- Une copie de l'autorisation délivrée par le pays d'origine de l'association ;

- La constitution d'un bureau haïtien dûment validé par les membres.

N.B.: En cas de perte de l'original de l'attestation, l'individu chargé d'effectuer le renouvellement des statuts doit présenter :

- Une lettre de demande de renouvellement indiquant la perte de l'attestation ;

- Un procès-verbal notifiant la perte de l'attestation avec signature des membres présents à l'assemblée générale ordinaire ou extraordinaire ;

- Un mandat de membre du comité directeur autorisant l'individu à entreprendre les démarches en vue de procéder au renouvellement ;

- Un certificat de plainte au commissariat le plus proche de la localité où œuvrant l'association.

Le Service des Organisations Sociales de la Direction du Travail encourage les organisations syndicales, patronales et sociales légalement reconnues à œuvrer pour le bien-être de la population.

RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI

MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET DU TRAVAIL

DIRECTION DU TRAVAIL

Présentation du Service des Organisations Sociales

12, Rue de l'Enterrement
Port-au-Prince, Haïti
Tel : 2222-9723

..... La fonction du travail désigne l'ensemble des activités manuelles ou intellectuelles exercées par un individu afin de subvenir à ses besoins et à ceux de sa famille. Cette fonction dans toute société est noble et cette noblesse justifie l'existence même de la Direction du Travail.

Le Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Travail (MAST) dans sa mission de veiller à l'harmonisation des rapports de travail a donc fait siens l'esprit et la lettre de la Convention No. 87 de l'OIT. Ainsi les instances compétentes ont institué un organisme d'opération ayant pour mission d'inciter les travailleurs, les artisans, les employeurs à mieux se consolider, se structurer en association afin d'assurer la défense de leurs intérêts communs. C'est dans cet esprit que les législateurs haïtiens ont inséré dans la loi organique du Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Travail le Service des Organisations Sociales, entité de la Direction du Travail qui a comme attributions de :

- Assurer l'application des dispositions légales respectives au fonctionnement des Syndicats ;
- Protéger les travailleurs, les porter à se syndiquer pour la défense de leurs intérêts professionnels ;
- Procéder à l'enregistrement légal et à la reconnaissance des syndicats après étude préalable de statuts de leur acte constitutif et de leur procès-verbal ;
- Entretenir des contacts permanentes avec les Organisations Syndicales et superviser leur fonctionnement suivant les dispositions du Code du Travail ;
- Donner à toute personne qui en fait la demande les consultations concernant la formation et de fonctionnement d'un syndicat ;
- Favoriser entre les membres des contacts fréquents et organiser à leur intention des cours ou conférences destinés à assurer l'évolution du mouvement syndical ;
- Mener des enquêtes sur les activités syndicales en général ;
- Apporter son assistance aux sociétés coopératives et diffuser en leur faveur les idées et les méthodes coopératives.
- Tenir à jour un fichier des Organisations Sociales, patronales et ouvrières ;
- Etablir des statistiques comparatives quant à leur fonctionnement.

## PROCEDURES D'ENREGISTREMENT

### 1. ORGANISATION

La Direction du Travail via le Service des Organisations Sociales est l'instance chargée de l'enregistrement et de la reconnaissance des Organisations Sociales.

Pour obtenir cet enregistrement légal, les dirigeants de l'organisation doivent soumettre les pièces suivantes :

1. Lettre de couverture (3 originalés)
2. L'Acte Constitutif (2 originales)
3. Le Procès-verbal ( 2 originales)
4. Les Statuts ( 2 originales)
5. Copie des cartes d'identité ou cartes d'identification nationale de tous les membres du Comité Directeur
6. Certificat de bonne vie et mœurs de tous les membres du Comité Directeur ON
7. Les frais d'impression de l'attestation ( Gdes 750).
8. 2 cartables 8½ x 11 grean

### I. MODELE DE LETTRE DE COUVERTURE

Mr Marie France MONDESIR
Directrice du Travail /MAST
En ses Bureaux.-

Madame la Directrice,

Le Comité Exécutif de l'Organisation (Association, Syndicat) dénommée : ..... vous présente ses compliments et a l'honneur de soumettre à votre Direction le dossier complet de ladite Organisation (ou Association ou Syndicat) pour son enregistrement légal.

Le Comité Exécutif vous prie d'agréer, Madame la Directrice, ses meilleures salutations.

Pour le comité :

### II. MODELE D'ACTE CONSTITUTIF

Nous, Membres fondateurs de l'O.S. réunis à ..... l ... en vue de fonder une Association (organisation syndicat) et de fait ayons fondé ladite .... Avec pou objectif général de :----
Les membres fondateurs sont :

| Nom et prénom | Nif/CIN | Signature |
|---|---|---|
| ..... | ..... | ..... |

N.B.- l'Acte Constitutif doit comporter la signatur d'au moins 10 membres fondateurs.

### III.- MODELE DE PROCES-VERBAL

L'An deux mille ..... et le ..., nous membres fondateurs de l'Organisation (Association, syndicat dénommée ..... Ayant pour sigle ....., réunis en assemblée générale en vue d'élire un comité directeur avec pour mission de bien gér l'Organisation.

~~Le comité est composé des personnalités suivantes :~~

| Nom et Prénom | Fonction | Signature |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

Il est recommandé aux membres fondateurs d organisations d'élire un comité directeur avec nombre impair en vue de mieux départager les voi lors des réunions.

### STATUTS

Les Statuts des organisations comportent d chapitres divisés en articles traitant au moins d sujets suivants : CHAP. I

TITRE a) Leur dénomination distinctive, leur sig leur objet et leur durée ; CHAP. II
TITRE b) Leur siège social c'est-à-dire leur adres complète ; CHAP. III
TITRE c) Les conditions d'admission de les membres ; CHAP. IV
TITRE d) Les droits et les devoirs du com directeur ; CHAP. V
TITRE e) La procédure à suivre pour le remplacem d'un ou plusieurs membres du com

# *Appendix 3: Guide to writing organizational constitution*

REPUBLIQUE D'HAITI

**MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES ET DU TRAVAIL**

**Du : Comité-Directeur du (de).....**

**AU : Responsable du SOS / BRS - MAST**

**Objet : Demande de Légalisation**

**Monsieur le Responsable,**

**Le Comité-Directeur du (de)..... ..... précité (e) vous présente ses compliments pour le bon travail que vous effectuez à travers le département et vous requiert de bien vouloir vous informer sur l'existence de (ce dernier ou cette dernière) pour suites utiles:**

**Description :.....**
**.....ayant pour Sigle :**
**.....Il (elle) est fondé (e) le .....**
**à .....en la .....Section Communale de (s).....avec pour objectif général de.....**
**.....**
**Et, a pour objectifs spécifiques d'œuvrer dans les domaines suivants:.....**
**.....**
**Par ailleurs, il (elle) se réunit ordinairement chaque : .....**
**ã partir de ..... Heures Am, pm.**

**Il (elle) fonctionne avec un Comité-directeur composé de..... membres, dont le sieur (la dame) ..... est le (la)....., domicilié (e) .....,**
**Identifié (e) au No:..... Phone: .....**

**Pour le Comité:**

| NOM | PRENOM | NIF/CIN | POSTE | SIGNATURE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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**Fait aux Cayes, le .....**

**Distinguées Salutations.**